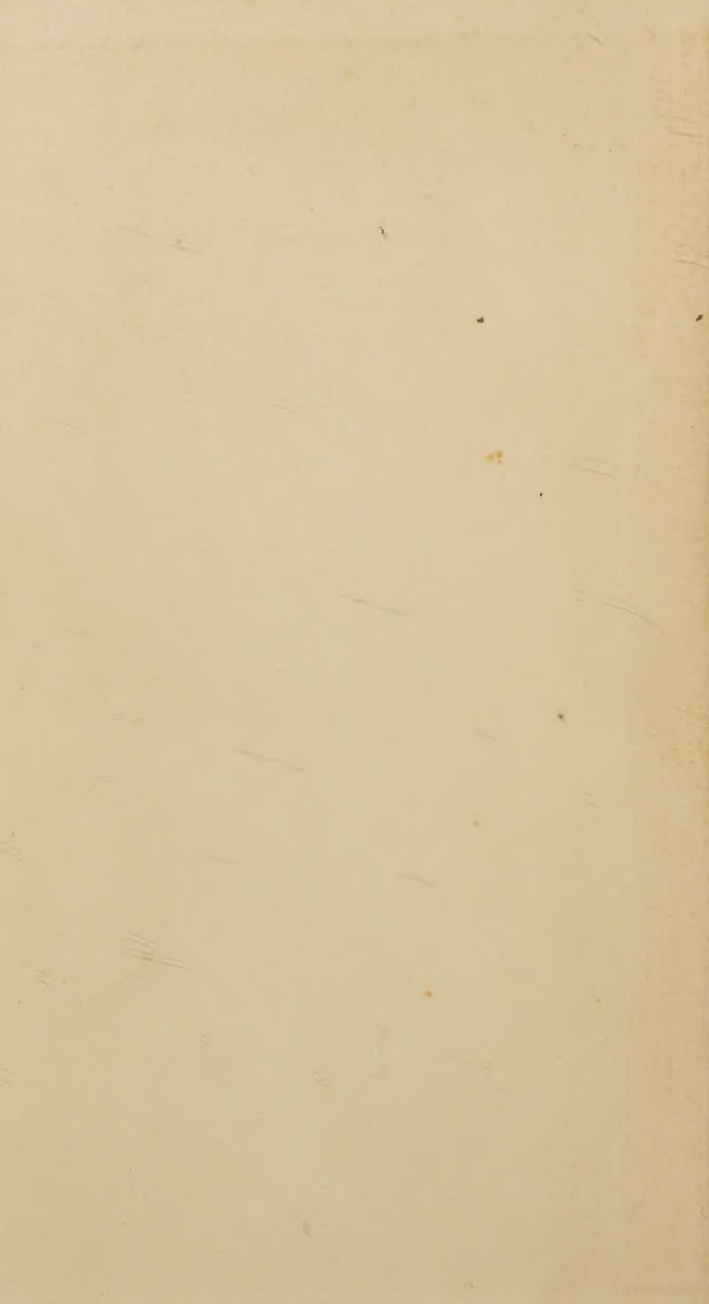


O'MALLEY
OF
SHANGANAGH

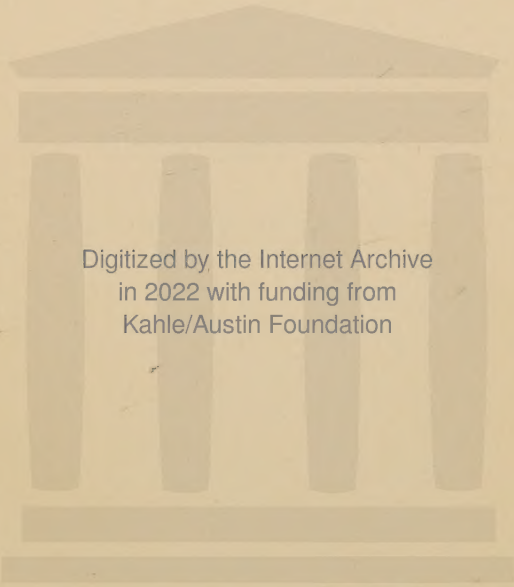
By

DONN
BYRNE



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O'MALLEY
OF
SHANGANAGH



HE WOULD SIT BY THE FIRE WITH A DECANTER OF BRANDY

O'MALLEY OF SHANGANAGH

BY
DONN BYRNE

Author of "Messer Marco Polo," "The Wind Bloweth,"
"Blind Raftery," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY
JOHN RICHARD FLANAGAN



THE CENTURY CO.
New York and London

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O'MALLEY OF SHANGANAGH

O'Malley of Shanganagh

CHAPTER I

IN any city you would have noticed that fierce old man, but in Dublin he called for no more than a passing glance, so many are there who seem exiled kings. At fifty-four you might have put his age, and you might have added as an after-thought, he might be ten or fifteen years older—a man who has lived outdoors all his life. He was a tall man, with white hair that rippled back as if it had once been a field of golden curls. Blue eyes that were washed out, it would appear to you, but were bold and fierce as some old eagle's. There was no stoop in his back. He was erect as any young soldier. He was invariably dressed, during the day,

in tweeds that smelled of turf and moss, in a stiff white collar of the double variety, and a tie of blue dotted with white spots. His neat brown shoes were made for him, and he wore a deer-stalker hat. Gloves nor stick he had neither.

As you saw him come up Grafton Street from College Green, and hesitate for an instant before going along Nassau, you might say, if you knew Dubliners, here is a man about to have a drink, and you would have prophesied Jammet's, where, after races, owners and trainers and betting men and other citizens of good Irish society stand one another drinks to celebrate victory or take the edge off defeat. Whichever way luck turns you have your drink anyhow. But the fierce old man went into one of the people's drinking houses. He did not have to order anything. The supercilious young jackeen behind the bar would just look at him.

"The same, Mr. Moore?"

The old man would nod, in his contemptuous way, as if contemptuous of the bar, of the assistant, of the drink, of himself. The assistant would give him a stiff glass of brandy, and add a little soda, collect his two shillings, and return to the end of the bar where he was discussing the chances of this or that greyhound for the Waterloo Cup, or what chance that disappointing steeplechaser, James Pigg, had in the Irish Grand National. If you were noticing the old gentleman you would have seen that his hand trembled when he brought the glass up to his lips, and that in a little while his hand was steady again, which is a bad sign in liquor.

Now when the old gentleman walked along Nassau Street passing the green lawns of Trinity you would have said, the old gentleman will turn into the Kildare Street Club. But the old gentleman passed by, as if unaware of the existence

of that most exclusive of societies. And he made his way toward that strange old Georgian quarter of the city where he lodged in two rooms in an ancient house. Angelica Kaufmann had painted the panels of these rooms, and they had lovely Georgian ceilings and Adam fireplaces. These were from many years ago, when Buck Whaley lived, who for a wager set out to play hand-ball against the walls of Solomon's Temple, and won his bet; of the Duke of Wellington, and of Castlereagh, that great moody misunderstood soul. And these were the days of Boss Croker, and Mr. John Redmond, and one Timothy Healy. And Buck Whaley, and the Iron Duke, and great Castlereagh—their hatred and their envy is now perished, nor have they any place under the sun.

Very quietly, in his two rooms, the old gentleman lived, a model to the lodging-house. The buxom landlady used him as an example to the other, as it were, guests

—the howling poets, the mad medical students, the ancient lawyers' clerks, who would roll home obscenely under their load of drink. After dinner, which he would take in his sitting-room, the old gentleman would rest for an hour; and then, quietly letting himself out with a latch-key, he would go off to one of the quieter public houses, where he would sit and drink in one of those box-like private apartments which are called "snugs." Occasionally other persons would drop in, and try to begin a conversation with him.

"'T is a grand night, glory be to God!" they would say if the moon were shining. And he would answer, "'T is!"

"'T is a soft night, so!" they would venture if it were raining, "a great comfort to the farming people this time of the year." All he would answer was, "'T is." No more could be extracted from him.

"Well, to hell with you and your 'T is,"

they would say under their breaths, finish their drinks, and be off to some place where folk took their liquor blithely as Christians should. But if they had uttered the thought aloud he would have made no protest. If it were a fine night he walked home straight as a die; if it were wet he hired a four-wheeler. The old gentleman never got drunk.

The old gentleman liked walking. He would go on a fine day out for a tramp through the streets and into the country. Curiously enough he chose the north side of the city, which is the less interesting and the more ugly side, for there are the most ghastly slums in Europe, and there by Clontarf are rubble heaps, dust, broken down dwellings. And "the Faynix," as Dublin calls its Phœnix Park, is a flat uninteresting place, such as you will see in the Midlands as ordinary country scarred by the most hideous statues in the world. Southward of the city is lovelies

Ireland, Rathfarnham, Milltown, and the singing Dodder, the blue peaks of the Sugar Loaves, Two-Rock and Three-Rock Mountains, and there are little lakes in the hills. Further south still are Avoca, where the waters meet, and Glendalough of the early Christian churches, the blue gorges of the Wicklow Hills. Because Killarney is near Cork, which is near London, and the Giant's Causeway is near Belfast, which is near Edinburgh, they are extolled as the beauties of Ireland—but tourists are always an unseeing folk. And Dublin itself pays little attention to its scenery, for there is always horse-racing, and good talk to be heard in bars. Scenery we have always with us, but a fine finish between three-year-olds is a sight not to be missed by an Irishman, and a good story surpasses jewels. When one is old and drowsy, and drawing near to God, then is the time for scenery.

But it was a queer thing that the old

gentleman should prefer the northern side of Dublin for his walks, passing gloomy Glasnevin, where Parnell and the other great Irish sleep, if their broken hearts will let them, avoiding the south side where flowers rioted and birds sang, and there was always the throaty murmur of doves. But then the old gentleman did n't like doves.

The old gentleman often went to race-meetings and coursing-matches. At coursing-matches he held himself very aloof, and at race-meetings he never went to the grand stand, for many years ago he got tired of people coming up and saying, "Is n't your name de Bourke O'Malley?" To which he would answer a curt, "No!" And they would go on and say: "It's strange, but you bear a remarkable resemblance to a man I knew once called de Bourke O'Malley, O'Malley of Shanganagh, but you are older I see—"

But the old gentleman would be rude.

"Never heard of him!" he would say, and train his racing-glasses on the post. But the hand holding the glasses trembled, and he would go back to the bar.

"Would it be the same thing you would be wanting, Mr. Moore?" the slatternly barmaid would ask.

"'T would!" And she would give him his brandy and soda.

So that in the end he was forced to go into the popular inclosure at the races to avoid being asked silly questions.

It is only in Dublin that an old gentleman can live within himself as Mr. Moore did. In America people would have insisted on being kind to him, secretly trying to take him out of himself. In England some manless superior woman would have woven a romance about him, and in her superior way would have married him whether he liked it or not. But in Dublin he was just one of Dublin's old men, whose stories are forgotten.

They come back to the gray city, and the silver mist, and the purple mountains. There is a crooning: "Ah, sure, what does it matter anyway? Life is short, and God is good, and, begob, the devil he is n't a bad fellow!" Life ambles on. The hair grays. The steps are shorter. The warmth of bars and the fleetness of racing-horses take one's mind from the epic failures of youth. Here is an old general officer who was robbed of a great campaign in Africa because a servant failed to relay a telegram. This old beau with the dyed hair, he was once an Austrian princess's fancy man. Who cares now? This bitter-faced Corkonian who backs a horse a half-crown each way, once he played a million francs across the table at Biarritz, when a million francs was a million francs and not a mass of greasy dubious paper, and laughed and lost. Now who cares? This old drunk-

ard with the green coat, ludicrous umbrella, he was crown solicitor for Fermanagh once. Who cares? Who blames him? None!

Here and there over the world, great names shine: poet and soldier and statesman. And Irish is a synonym for dash and romance and wit. One sees the great successes, but the great failures one does n't see. The lawyer who was on his way to the lord chancellorship when drink tripped him; the great statesman who was ruined because of a woman; the poet whose star sickened and died, as a pearl dies, on the barren stones of London or New York. They come back. They grow old. They are "characters" in Dublin. The world envies the wit that can flay a man from his skin, and the courage and skill that will take him outside and shoot him if he does n't like it. Old men, old graying men. So jolly, so

witty, these Irish! Ah, but the long nights the world does n't see, and the old men crying in their bedrooms.

It takes them to her heart, herself, Dublin, the City of Failure, the Dead City. By day the sun shines over the green lawns of Trinity, the broad bosom of Anna Liffey. In the fields are coursing, the racing of horses. Night comes. The ill-lit streets are full of shadows. The moon discloses the gray ruins, like the body of some old graying man, near to dissolution. The moon keeps rising. The city sleeps. There is no modernity in it. Through alley and by quay the old ghosts go. And Lady Morgan's coach rolls through College Green, and Emmet is led to the scaffold, and Lord Edward is stabbed by Major Sirr. And here wanders Oliver Goldsmith, to find a city more deserted than Auburn. And by St. Patrick's poor Stella wrings her hands. And through

the streets are ghostly soldiers, dragoon
and hussar and fusilier, off to die for some
foreign prince in some foreign country.
And Sir Brian Maguire roams staring
through the shadows, too proud to beg.
And the bucks ruffle their brocades and
fondle their dueling-swords, Buck Whaley
and Major Roche and Tiger Kilkelly.
And great Jamaican negroes carry Irish
ladies in their chairs to Dublin Castle
through a maze of torches.

All through Dublin these ghosts roam,
as thoughts will roam through the head
of an old man, and it far in the night, and
he not sleepy—epic figures and things of
youth, ghosts in the dim tortuous alleys
of the mind.

CHAPTER II

IT was so many years since he had been home now that O'Malley had all but forgotten how sweet the old place was. The low ivy-covered building with the tall trees about it, the green lawns, the French windows which his father had had let into dining- and drawing-rooms, turning the old Irish house into some esthete's dream of delight. His father, Alick O'Malley, had been such a harsh, forbidding man, such a type of the old Irish soldier, that one wondered how he had ever consented to such a change being made. But his father was eminently practical, an engineer officer. And besides, he had been a long space in India. However, there the sweet old house was. The eaves with the swallows' nests, whence they would dart

at eventide. And here all around the lawn were small modest flowers, an herbaceous border, as the gardeners called it. Down back of the house were orchards, with beehives all about them, beehives of yellow straw, with the brown population humming in and out, on their way to the heather of the Scalp, or to the corn-fields where this summer the poppies were a nuisance to the farmer people, but a godsend to the brown humming bees. All, all were there, the flowers in the garden, the stately trees, the sleek dappled cows in the byres, the matched horses; but she, who had made the whole place a dream of beauty, she, his mother, was gone. His father had died years before, but him de Bourke had not regretted so much, he had been so harsh, so much the senior officer. But his mother who had been at fifty-four as pretty as a girl of nineteen, so sweet her face was, so much of loveliness had remained to her neck

and hands, to think of her gone was impossible, and yet she was not there.

It was only early that year, at Naples, he had seen her. He had come from Malta, where he was stationed with his regiment, to spend a few weeks with her. She had seemed so fresh, so dignified, so Irish, in that blatant Greco-Latin atmosphere. She was like soft Three-Rock Mountain putting flaming Vesuvius to shame. Her white hair, that had once been as golden and rippling as his was, her brown eyes; she had been so small compared to her big son. And yet there was so much kindness, so much wisdom in her.

They had sat on the terrace of their hotel, watching the sun drop back of Sorrento and Capri; the vulgar ocher-colored Mediterranean sunset. The white flame of Vesuvius became reddish in the dusk. The crimson sails off Santa Lucia faded into the purple sea. And the

little hush there is before the moon rises, was over all the land.

"When I am gone, little son," she asked quietly, "what will you do?"

De Bourke had laughed. To his immense vitality the thought of death was foreign. She put out her soft hand.

"Yet I must, little son. It is not a sad thing. For me I am not worried, but I am worried for you."

"When I was a girl," she said, "I dreamed of all manner of great things. I dreamed of love and romance, and a fine useful life. But your father, dear son, he was a fine man and a good soldier, so that I became a soldier's wife, and went from barrack to barrack quietly, until we settled down at home. And in Shanganagh, dear son, in the quiet of Shanganagh I thought a great deal."

"Yes, mother," the big man answered quietly.

"I am a soldier's widow and a soldier's

mother," she went on, "and yet I would say this: do not be a soldier, son. It is not worth it to live a whole life on the chance of a moment like the White Brigade's at Balaklava, and likely as not, never even have that, but a death in a trench, like some poor beggars overcome by want and cold. And between garrison and garrison, son, the mind dies."

He squeezed her fingers. He had thought of that too often himself.

"Son, when I am gone, go back to Shanganagh in Ireland, and live there. It is my own place, not your father's. If I am allowed to come back now and then, it is to Shanganagh I will come. Son, I know you better than your father knew you. There is more in you of me than of him. He was a good man and a good soldier, and he thought there was nothing better than being a good soldier, so he made you one. But, son, I know better for you.

"Don't let Shanganagh go, son. I should hate to think of it in strange ununderstanding hands. Go back there, when I am gone, and wait for what God sends you."

He pressed her hand again. It was on the tip of his tongue to tell her he would resign now and go live with her there; take up the life about him, the hunting with the Meath, the racing at Baldoyle, the care of the little property. New forces were coming into Irish politics. The Land League was swinging into power, and, rushing onward like a great machine, it was confounding large absentee owner with small conscientious Irish landlord. England itself was moved and on the point of granting independence. Mr. Parnell was smashing at the Commons of Great Britain. There was talk of secret societies, Invincibles, God knows what. There might be a revolution. Of all countries in Europe, it was

most interesting to be in. He decided he would send in his resignation, and quietly, unknown to her, turn up one day soon at Shanganagh. How it would surprise her!

But it probably didn't surprise her. For on his way home from Malta to England on board ship, the Lady of Shanganagh died.

CHAPTER III

IN his years away, Ireland had changed. Beneath Three-Rock Mountain, a little town was springing up, ugly as all new little towns are, a town of brick and concrete that should have been in progressive, material Wales rather than in drowsy Ireland; and the fishing-village of Dunleary, with its thatched cottages, its turf smoke rising in straight blue columns, was being pushed out of existence by this new thing of Kingstown. Dublin there was no knowing, such a craze for statues had suddenly overtaken the corporation, so that here was one to Daniel O'Connell and here one to Smith O'Brien, and an ornate one, most beautifully situated, to Thomas Moore, and somewhere a little plaque to Clarence Mangan. Only that

the money gave out, there would have been one to Wolfe Tone.

Old houses, old estates were gone. And those not gone were empty. The wizened old coachman, who had driven his mother, more a gnome than a human being, told him the tragic history of his neighbors.

"Where are the Hogans?"

"'T is how three of them, your Honor, were killed in the Zulu War, and ould Sir Timothy, when he heard of it, he turned his face to the wall and died."

"And where are the de Laceys?"

"The ould man, your Honor, he lost everything on a horse they said would beat the world in the English Derby, so that the sons had to go to Canada, and he himself died in the latter end."

"And young Sir Miles Keogh?"

"'T is how he married an English-woman, your Honor, and took a great dislike to her afterwards, and began the

drinking, so that he died, and she went back to England where she came from."

"And where are the Butlers of Drimmond?"

"In Kill o' the Grange, your Honor, with a thousand more like them. Young Larry, he stretched his neck in the hunting-field, he was the first to go, and Gillamore, the drink finished him, as it did many a good man before him. And then the three daughters, they died. They would n't go outside the house, so a consumption came on them, and they went within the year. 'T is said that some one cursed them, so that they 're all in Kill o' Grange now; and Drimmond itself, where there was so many balls given, lashings and leavings of liquor, 't is a sort of convent now."

"A convent?"

"Well, a sort of a convent, your Honor. 'T is this way. They 're English, and queer, and not Catholics, but a queer

brand of Protestants, that are like Catholics, but the Catholics won't have anything to say to them. The ould one at the head of it, she calls herself the lady abbess, begor! And 't is what they say, that all of them under her are lords' daughters. Oh, Ireland is coming to a queer time when Mr. Parnell is taking up with the Irish party, and the hay and feed bills going up every week, and English-women letting on to be Irish nuns.

"Would n't be how your Honor would think, them women would be mad?"

"Oh, I don't know, Grogan. They are probably very sincere."

"'T is how your Honor ought to have a look, and you passing Drimmond. There's one or two would knock you blind with their beauty, and I was considered a judge in my youth."

Against all this tragedy, this desolation, Shanganagh was a fortress. Here was the old drawing-room with the mellow

mahogany beloved of an elder day, and here from the wall hung the portraits of soldier O'Malleys: the O'Malley who had fought at Waterloo, and the O'Malley with the pigtail and three-cornered hat, who had fought at Blenheim, and the O'Malley, the renegade O'Malley, who had fought with the Young Pretender at Prestonpans, and he was in the costume of the Black Watch, kilt and claymore. Him, more than the other hard-bitten fighting men, de Bourke resembled, but where he had long, straight locks, de Bourke had his mother's curling hair. And here and there were pictures of horses, as in every Irish house—long fleet horses which had won Derbies and St. Legers, with jockeys up who would appear grotesque in our day, with their long stirrup and their long rein, led by owners in stovepipe hats and Dundreary whiskers. They were not art, as understood at any time, nor sport, as we of the new racing-

school see it; but they were pathetic, and one got fond of them, as one is fond of an old blind dog that snuffles by the fire. There was the dining-room with its wealth of Irish silver and Irish glass, and the gun-room with its shining barrels for the cunning snipe and the partridge and the thundering grouse. And outside was the garden, not a blaze of roses, as many Irish gardens are, but a harmony of the small modest flowers his mother loved—she who would give refuge to bird or beast or plant when all the world tired of it. And back of the garden was the stretch of the Ten-Acre field, green, dappled with buttercups, where the sleek Jersey cows grazed. Four great chestnut-trees stood on a knoll in it, a knoll that was called a rath or fairy fort, where on midsummer eve the fairies, so country legend went, held antique dances, swaying and crossing and whirling to the strain of the fairy pipes.

He had put an order in at Sewell's, the horse-dealer's, to be on the lookout for a couple of good hunters for him, for when November came he intended to go with the Ward Union, "chasing the goat," as stag-hunting is familiarly known in Ireland, and with the Meath, for the real reason of Ireland's being, which is hunting Himself the Fox. He was on the lookout for a good red Irish setter pup which he could train to the gun, and had already, through his agent, engaged a fishing at Enniskillen, where if the owner was to be believed, which he is never, was "fair boiling with salmon."

It was so very pleasant, after life in barracks, to come to dinner in a dinner-jacket instead of mess uniform; to be by himself instead of the eternal company of the regiment; the growling about wine, the cursing against the caterer; the omnipresent jealousies and irritations of army life; the meaningless or dangerous flirta-

tions; the whist; the silly pony-racing. But to sit by one's fireside, and not have to bother about people, that was bliss.

One got room for reading and thought. He began to read the earlier Victorians, Browning, and Alfred, Lord Tennyson, and that strange genius, Lord Lytton, and that disturbing book of Mr. Darwin's. There was no privacy in army life. And there was so much to think about—Ireland herself, and that English sisterhood who had come across to Ireland and who sang matins and complin in the house where once the Butlers lived—great sportsmen and laughing beautiful Irish girls. Where once the ball-room was, perhaps, that had been such a blaze of light, the hooded sisters prayed, their hearts going out in fragrance toward the Lord. It was all so queer, so romantic. Ireland was already taking hold of him in thought, putting her subtle poison in his veins. He thought, too, seeing how com-

fortable he was here, seeing how fond of his mother he had been, that he was one of those Irish bachelors who go through life without ever the idea of marriage seeming attractive to them. There is a strange mixture of celibacy and romance in Irish men, or perhaps it is the fear of domesticity killing romance that deters them from marrying. Unless they marry young they do not marry at all. Those who marry at normal ages spend most of their time in clubs, away from their wives. "To settle down and be respectable," is an English phrase and custom very alien to the Gael.

"I won't marry for years," de Bourke thought, "if ever I marry at all." Ireland had not only gripped him in spirit, but in mind and tongue. "Sure a woman would only put the house about!"

CHAPTER IV

TO go into Dublin, or to go anywhere north or east, it was necessary for him to go along the broad Stillorgan road; and not two miles from his own house, on the road, lay Drimmond where once the Butlers lived. One of the horses he had ordered had been found for him, a big five-year black, three-quarter bred, with manners that would soon be perfect, given a little work. Early in the morning, and in the cool of the evening, he was out riding him. And the more he went about the country-side, the more the charm of it came on him. In the morning there would be a white mist, the foggy dew the Irish called it, that rolled from hedge to hedge of hawthorn, where little hillocks would stand out like islands; at midday



AN OLD MAN STOPPED HIM ON THE ROAD ONE MORNING

there would be a blue heat-shimmer, everywhere silence, horses standing under the shade of trees, and cows knee-deep in the mountain streams; and when the long Irish twilight would come, all the birds sang, blackbird and thrush and small green linnet, and there would be the whir of the bat and the darting of swallows.

The people he met on the roads and talked with were figures that might have come out of a time when life was freer, bolder. An old man stopped him on the road one morning, a queer old man with a shuffling walk, and a ruddy face, and eyes bright as a bird's.

"Would you be having a match about you now, I wonder?" he asked.

"I would." O'Malley passed him a box. The old man produced a small clay pipe.

"Would there be the least taste of tobacco at you?" he hazarded.

"There would," O'Malley answered,

and handed him his pouch. The old man quietly filled his pipe.

"'T is a great comfort," he observed, "a draft of tobacco-smoke, and you traveling the roads."

"Is it tramping it you are?" O'Malley asked.

"'T is not," he said, "and 't is. It's not a tramp I am, in the meaning of the word, but a queer fellow," he went on, "has no liking for a house or for steady company. So that I keep going around Ireland, walking it, in the sunwise turn, keeping always to the right, it being healthy and lucky. 'T is how I've made twenty-seven circuits of Ireland, each as interesting as the other."

"Have you no occupation?"

"I have," he answered, "and a good one, too. I'm a player of cards; and at spoil-five, or nap, or the Irish game of five thousand up, there is n't my beating in the Irish nation, though I must admit,"

he nodded, "there 's a farmer in Longford who 's near my equal. I played him ten games of five thousand up, for a fat sheep, me risking my championship. He had me nearly beat," he said, "but at the thirty-third hour he took a great weakness and had to be carried off in his boots. I have to be going now," he said, "for to-night I sleep at Bray."

"Have you any money?" O'Malley asked.

"Devil a penny!"

"Does n't it worry you?"

"Devil a bit!"

"Would a pound help you?"

"Is it a tramp you take me for, and me the champion card-player of the five provinces of Ireland? You impudent pup!" And he moved quietly off following the sunwise turn through Ireland.

It was such a difference from the life he had been accustomed to—the carefulness of the English mind, the policy of

saving up your money, of having a home when you are old, some place to die in with comfort. A little road they hacked through a mountain-side, and followed blindly, forgetting all else in the world. And they called it wisdom!

He received another shock one morning. One morning he lost his way on the roads about Three-Rock Mountain. A tribe of Irish Gipsies passed him on their way to Wicklow, strings of red carts drawn by quiet donkeys, swarthy proud-looking men driving them, while the copper-colored Gipsy women walked alongside in their red skirts and red kerchiefs, their eyes bold, their hands slim, golden, Egyptian. Around their necks were necklaces of coins, here a spade guinea, there a doubloon from the wrecks of the Armada, there an old Irish silver penny. Their necklaces made a soft clinking harmony as they walked. There was a Gipsy in rags riding a fine blood

horse. Here one shuffled along with the flattened nose and cauliflower ear and wary eye of the professional boxer. At the end of the procession, the chief and his woman strode. He was a great tall man, six foot and seven inches of him, with a magnificent black beard. He had immense black baggy trousers, and a fine white shirt. On his back was an old shooting-coat. On one hand a great emerald ring shone. The woman beside him was a fine broad-bosomed woman, with a face tanned to bronze, and fair flax-like hair. Not of the blood of Gipsies, de Bourke thought. She was in an old flannel blouse and an old tweed skirt, and miraculously clean.

"Could you tell me how to get to Rath-farnham?" O'Malley asked.

The chief looked at him with black arrogant eyes, said nothing, walked ahead. But the woman stopped.

"I rather think if you keep to your

right you 'll get there. It's a matter of about three miles."

O'Malley stared. The voice was the voice of a lady, of an Irish lady. The answer was such as he might have had on an Irish hunting-field. All the wonder he felt that such as she should be in this motley outlaw horde, and evidently the woman of the chief, must have showed in his face. She raised her eyebrows slightly, as a duchess of the older school might have done at some impertinent question, and went onward with her man and tribe into the blue mysterious Wicklow Hills.

And he said to himself, what was this country where people dared to live as they chose? Where a lady fell in love with a Gipsy and followed him and his tribe as easily as another might follow the hunt, where an old man refused a pound when there was not a penny in his pocket! Why had he stayed away from it so long?

Why had he chanced losing it? All the world knew how romantic Ireland was, barring the Irish, who would follow all over the world a will-o'-the-wisp of their choosing. Even the Anglican sisterhood of Drimmond felt the pull of it, felt here was a setting for their romantic faith. In England there would be no place fitting for a revival of the medieval nunnery where noble and gentle women could lead a contemplative life, in the words of the Apostle James, "unspotted from the world."

When he was a boy, before he had gone to the military college at Sandhurst, he had always been around Drimmond. It was a largish place, about a hundred acres of park and garden, with nine greenhouses. A heavy rather dark house of the Victorian type. In the hall were antlers, and a great fire, and statues of Oliver Goldsmith and Edmund Burke, replicas of those outside Trinity gate. The

drawing-room was beautiful, with its sweet length and great windows that gave on the tennis-court; but other than that the house was dull, stuffy. It was more a house for dances by night than life in the daytime. He could remember it better, lit up for a ball, with the older men sitting in the study or the dining-room drinking and talking, and the sharp click of billiards from down the corridor, and the three daughters of the house, Nora and Finola and Margery Ann, making the place echo to soft laughter, and young Larry and big Gillamore, with their lurching horseman's walk, and white-haired old General Butler who assumed more dignity the more he drank, and the Lady Evelyn Butler whom one saw seldom, such an invalid she was, a thin wasted woman with the reddish face of a dyspeptic and large uncomely, marble-blue eyes. One would have said that line would have persisted

forever. Yet where were they now? In Kill o' the Grange.

And yet—he wondered—was there not about the old place a queer look of doom? Under the old general's hand it never prospered. The fruit-trees bore little. The flower-gardens came to a sickly spring. Things there had not the healthy power of Shanganagh. Such horses as the Butlers bought had a trick of going off. And the laughing girls, Nora, Finola, and Margery Ann, who were always teasing him, threatening to kiss him, shocking him in devilment as Irishwomen will, was there not under their hectic gaiety a note of doom? Could one ever see them as buxom wives, merry and busy? One hardly could.

Here was a queer thing: from such information as he had, since the sisterhood had taken over Drimmond it had prospered. The produce of the gardens,

pears, and apples, strawberries, what not, came in abundance. The Drimmond cart, driven by a sleek black-coated man, with a theological air, and theological vices, such as careful dram-drinking and small shrewd betting, was always at Kingstown pier with loads of fruit and flowers for the London markets. The park was let to a big Dublin dairy, whose hundred cows grazed in the park in the lush blue grass. And the rooms that had been gloomy, so de Burke had heard, were now light and beautiful, so much had the sisters done with beeswax and flowers.

The place exercised a fascination over de Bourke. Passing the low wall on his new horse, he would often rein up, and stand in his irons to look at it. There was the park, and around it the old walk where were clouds of bluebells. There the trees where Finola had her swing. And now and then he would see one of the sisterhood passing along the walks or

the gardens, reading her book of hours, or overseeing the men and women at work. They were dressed in wide white garments, with a great leathern belt, and over their heads and close about their faces they wore a sort of hood, so that only their features were vaguely visible. They had all the unmistakable walk of gentlewomen, the straight back, the firm step. None had the plod of the peasant, or the short inhibited tread of the bourgeoisie. They were vague, white, mysterious, but one did n't feel about them as one did about their sisters of Rome, that they were simply spiritual entities, their bodies as though in a grave, and only their souls remained swathed in garments of black. No, this Anglican sisterhood might have devoted their lives to poverty, obedience, and chastity, but they were women. They could laugh; they could talk. They had clean virginal bodies, unclouded virginal eyes.

A part of Drimmond, where it touched a lane that turned from the Stillorgan road downward to the sea, rose in a wave until it was as high as the wall that surrounded it. And here a couple of old trees waved, and in the rich loam about their roots the bluebells sprang, and tall daffodils. A bent old apple-tree, past bearing age, crooked its gnarled branches over the flowers, as if it wished, no longer fecund, to foster; and some woman of the Butlers, not those of the family de Bourke had known, but some aunt or mother of an elder generation, had set a marble garden-seat near it. There the last rays of sunset lingered, before day had crossed Three-Rock Mountain on its way over the western sea.

He had come from Donnybrook that afternoon and, passing Drimmond at this spot, he pulled up the black hunter and turned around to look. The cattle were grazing in the large park, and here a pony

of the sisters was racing around, a pony they kept for a trap in which occasionally they went to Dublin, when it was necessary. There was a soft Irish warmth in the air, the drowsy feeling of the golden Irish afternoon.

He shook his head. Why had not Drimmond been as peaceful and happy for the three soft Irish girls as for the competent English religious?

"Did you know this place before we had it?"

The voice was firm and sweet, the voice of a singer. He started in his saddle, so that the big black horse moved uneasily. He looked up.

She wore the white garments of the sisterhood and the broad leather belt, heavy serge garments, heavy leather belt, but they set off, as by some cunning design, the white, the healthily white face. Her eyes were golden, a light brown that was orange. They were like queer stones,

but they were alive. Her white garments were no whiter than her face, but her face was alive. And out of that healthy beautiful face the marvelous eyes looked calm and clear. Above the eyes the long sweet eyebrows swept, darkish, near purple, as though the hair the hood concealed were deep auburn. Her soft small mouth, not over-red, was beautiful. De Bourke thought in all his wanderings he had never seen so beautiful a face. Her hands were crossed and concealed by her sleeves. She put the thumbs in her great belt, as a boy might do. The fingers were long and white, healthy and glowing against the leather and dead serge.

"Yes," de Bourke said, "I knew this place very well, and I a boy. I knew the lads of the house, and the three girls. I knew them very well, Miss—"

"Sister Ursula."

"Sister Ursula!"

He kept looking at her. He thought

that never could a picture be so beautiful, the young sweet religious with her face of wonder, leaning against the old apple-tree, with the boyish gesture of her thumbs. And about her feet the harebells clustered.

"They were unlucky, poor things!"

"There was some doom over them, now I think," O'Malley pondered. "This house," he looked at her, "is one of the Irish tragedies that break the heart."

"Then you don't think we should be here?"

"I do not."

She gave a little twisted smile.

"Nobody wants us," she said. "The people don't care for us because we are not of Rome. The bishop disapproves of us, and the only chaplain we can get is a young Oxford esthete. And those of our own faith in Ireland look askance at us. In Ireland," she smiled, "they take

their religion neat. It 's very hard," she said.

He was sitting easily on the restive horse that was throwing its head down, and champing, and making a little hole in the road with its left fore iron. In white cord riding-breeches and black boots, in tweed coat and creamy stock, he was like a figure of some woman writer's fancy. His face was tanned by the sun of Malta, and his head was erect and firm, as an officer's head must be. There were his brown eyes and fair hair—his mother's legacy; the brown eyes that were not the eyes of a soldier at all, but the eyes of a dreamer, and the waving fair hair that he wore unhatted, not from vanity, but from relief to escape from the splitting Mediterranean and Egyptian sun.

"Well," he said, "is n't it rather hard to take you seriously? Is it usual for a religious to talk to a strange young man?"

"But we are not hedged about with the

restrictions of our sisters of Rome. And also, I am, though a religious, a lady; and you, though strange, are, to use a vulgar word, a gentleman."

"I trust so," O'Malley said humbly.

"Though Mother Walpurga would hardly approve of it," the sister smiled. Her lips opened as a flower, and a smile was in her eyes, like a softly shaded lamp. "Indeed Mother Walpurga has strong notions on the subject of sin."

From somewhere in Drimmond an old bell rang softly six strokes of the clock, and with a gentle nod the young religious changed from being the laughing girl of the great world to the meek nun. Through the soft Irish sunshine she moved, a white figure, down the green alleys of the park, her head bowed, her beautiful slim hands in the wide cuffs of her white robe, her lips moving to the words of the Angelus according to the use of Sarum:

"The Angel Gabriel brought tidings to Mary: and she conceived by the Holy Ghost.

"Alleluia!

"How shall this be, O Angel of God, seeing that I know not a man?

"Hearken, O Mary, Virgin of Christ: the Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee.

"Alleluia!

"In thy grace and in thy beauty, go forth, ride on prosperously, and reign: in thy grace and in thy beauty. Alleluia.

"God hath given her the help of His countenance.

"God is in the midst of her, therefore shall she not be removed.

"Alleluia!"

CHAPTER V

DE BOURKE might have looked on this meeting with Sister Ursula, as he looked on the meeting with the champion card-player of Ireland, or with the lady who had gone off to follow the Gipsy king, as part of the strange Irish miracles, but for this, that out of her eyes, out of her hands, had come such a strong sweet vitality. If she had touched him with her hand he would have felt power. And when she had gone, she had left behind not a beautiful picture, but a sense of personality. He passed Drimmond three or four times without seeing her, and he was troubled to find himself, as he came around the bend of the road, wondering whether she would be there, and finding such an acute sense of disappointment in

himself that she was not. The old apple-tree had no charm for him, nor the cloud of bluebells, nor the straight proud daffodils. It was like a house out of which a friend had gone, empty—empty and useless. If it had been a woman he would have recognized himself, as the trite phrase is, in love; but one does n't fall in love with a religious any more than one does with a ghost. No, he told himself, he was not in love. He was merely needful of a little of the beauty the Anglican sisterhood had imprisoned in moody Drimmond.

And then one Sunday morning, passing in the sunshine that was like some rich golden wine, through an open window, of their chapel perhaps, he heard the notes of a small organ, and a glorious contralto voice soar like a lark in the shimmering air.

“There the Trinity of Persons
Unbeclouded we shall see;

There the Unity of Essence
Perfectly revealed shall be;
While we hail the Threefold Godhead
And the simple Unity."

His heart bounded, and he reined in his horse abruptly, clumsily, so that they nearly fell. Something told him, There is only one person whose voice that is, and that is she. And he said, Don't be foolish. And again something said to him, That is hers. Foolish or not you may be, but that is hers.

"Laud and honour to the Father;
Laud and honour to the Son;
Laud and honour to the Spirit;
Ever Three and ever One;
Co-substantial, co-eternal,
While unending ages run."

And after that, a long flute-like
"Amen!"

The horse walked on, while he sat, his head bare, his head bowed. There had

passed over him a current of purity, such as he had never known. He was, as it were, without his own body, his inner self bathed by this cool yet radiant fire. And yet, and yet, there was such a compelling personal appeal to him, knowing—he had doubt it was she—that behind the voice were golden eyes, and hands lovely as and more healthy than lilies.

He said to himself, Am I to be like that Irish lady, who followed the Gipsy, falling into an unheard, unnatural love, with this white sister, but never knowing love, she being a spirit, where the Irish lady knew her Gipsy man? Am I to grow like one of those strange Irish men, who never marry, but have a great beauty in their faces? And he said, If this is to be, let it be!

But shall I ever see her again? And he answered himself: Probably not. Better not. But some queer knowledge within him clanged like a bell: You will.

He saw her again under the apple-tree, when the hush of the Irish midday was in the air. Even the bees were drowsy, the brown, the ever-busy bees. And the flowers seemed asleep, so quiet they were. The cows were quiet under the large trees. And the mountains nodded in the distance through the blue heat-haze. And as she stood in her wide white garment and leathern belt, there was a dream in her eyes. He faltered as he rode, for he did n't know whether or not he could speak to her. But she gave him her soft smile that was like a flower opening.

"Was it you," he asked abruptly, "who were singing on Sunday morning?"

"It was I," she answered.

"I knew it." She made no comment. A little smile came into her eyes. It was as though they had known each other for years.

"I am lonely to-day," she said. "Tonight my little friend here, the only young

sister outside myself, is going to England to be received. The bishop here will not have anything to do with us. He says our receptions into the order are theatrical, and not religion. So little Cecily must go to England for it, and I shall have none to talk to any more."

"Are they theatrical? I know so little of this," de Bourke said. "Marching soldiers to church, with a band playing the regimental march, a quiet service and a dry sermon; there is nothing theatrical about ours."

"But ours is not theatrical," she said. There was a lovely seriousness in her orange eyes. How fitly her lips moved, how like music was her voice! "And the reception of a sister into our order is very beautiful. It is an elaborate marriage service," she said, "with bridesmaids, and candles. And the bishop shears one's hair off. And thenceforward one is a bride and a spouse."

"But the bridegroom?" de Bourke asked foolishly.

"The bridegroom is the Lord Christ Jesus." She told him simply. There was something so overwhelming in the idea that de Bourke bowed his head.

"Are you—are you received?" he asked.

"I—I am a novice," she said. There was a troubled look in her face, had he noticed it. "But my hair is gone," she smiled. "I took it off myself." And she turned her head away. "But little Cecily," she went on, "she will be a loss to me."

"But there are so many others here!" he suggested.

"They are all kind and wise, but Mother Walpurga is old, and she talks only of the courts and great people she knew when she was a great ambassador's wife. And she prays for their souls. And Sister Winifred is all for reclaiming

little children's souls and bodies, and Sister Angela has no interests outside her flowers. And the rest, the rest are just nuns," she smiled, "faithful, simple, religious. But Cecily understood how I loved the mountains, and the trees, and the queer shadows on the grass, and the moon how gold it is, and the rustle of the gentle things at night. And to-night there will be a full moon, and Cecily will not be there."

"May I come?" The words came out of him unawares. He was shocked at himself for asking. And her face grew paler, her eyes larger. There was in all of her the look of a deer about to rush away.

"To talk for a minute," he said, "under the full moon. And to take from you, if I can, a little of the pain of your friend's going."

"It would be very wrong," she said.

"May I be a friend, too, Sister Ursula?"

I don't know if I can, you being a religious, and myself a person in the outside world. But if I can, let me be one. For I am in Ireland without a friend. My only friend, my mother, died but a little while ago, and she, too, loved the shadows on the grass and the great midsummer moon. May I?" his voice was a little hoarse.

"You won't disturb me? You won't trouble me?" Her eyes went to him in a heartrending appeal.

"I would sooner cut my hand off at the wrist."

"I don't know," she answered. "It might be wrong. I can't tell. I don't know." She left him abruptly, in a swift walk that was almost a run. Half-way down the harebell-bordered path, she paused, irresolute, and then went on. Her white robe vanished into the tunnel of over-arching trees.

CHAPTER VI

NOW, the Irish midsummer moon is not a thing you can compare to a great coin, or to a lantern hanging in the sky, or to any familiar thing. It sails westward, a golden planet, over the Irish Sea. It discloses the blue Irish mountains, the grouse nesting in the heather, the trout at the bottom of the Irish stream, such light is there in it. The great mountains of the moon, the bays, the winding fiords of it are visible. And so near do they seem that a giant might reach out his immense hand and touch them, or some jinnee out of the stories of Scheherazade obscure its surface with his immense bat-like wings.

And it wreaks strange magic over the land. Beneath the hills one can hear the

hammer of Cuala, the great smith, crashing home on his anvil. Out of their raths come the little lost people of the world, the fancy folk, playing their music that is at the same time merry and sad. It is not a merry moon as it seems in England, for the magic it wreaks is somehow purposeful. The hammer of Cuala is, by legend, beating out a great sword to free the world. And there is something mystic, not joyful, about the dancing of the dim fairy folk. And in times of trouble, it is at the rising of the moon that arms glint by the river. It comes, and it does this to us, that we feel we are on a plane where there is mystery and beauty and freedom. Wine, which maketh glad the heart of man, has not the potency of the Irish moon. The poor man forgets his poverty, and the puny man feels strength within him. It is under the midsummer moon that we dare to be great and free. . . .

The old apple-tree threw weird shadows and lines, like the lines some Cabalist might draw for an invocation, on the flower-powdered grass. The stretch of Drimmond Park was like a field seen in a dream. The trees were dim and elf-like. The cows lying in long grass were like soft animals in an old mythology. Under the light of the moon the white robe of the religious blended into the scene, as if she were not she, but part of the moonlight, part of the soft flowers and elfin trees.

De Bourke had thought of speaking of the moonlight, of the park, and the slumbering mountains, but out of his mouth there blurted a question:

“Are you happy? Tell me, are you happy here?”

She looked at him. He could feel her soft gaze on him, not keen, careless, as it was in the daytime, but soft, as though

her soul, her personality, were merging into this intricacy of tree and grass.

"It will be like this," she said quietly; she did not answer his question. "It will be like this when we are dead. We shall be soft gentle folk, under a golden moon."

"But when we are alive?"

"We live," she sighed, "only to die."

"We do not," de Bourke revolted; "we live for life itself. And when we are dead is a question about which even the most faithful of you have doubts."

"But we live," she said. "We work. We pray. Our life is beautiful."

"But it is not life."

"I know," she mused. "I often think. Past our gate the people go, struggling and laughing and sometimes weeping. The peasant women with their children, the tinkers roaming the world in carts, the folks on side-cars going to races; people drunk, people tragic. And we go

our ways, reading our office, prime and tierce, sext and none, praying that one may be saved from the lion's mouth, and our lowliness from the horns of the unicorns. And when we weep, we weep selfishly, pitying ourselves. We do not weep because we have known tragedy."

"It is not life," de Bourke said. "Why, if there is a heaven, should you go to heaven? You have done nothing but be beautiful, live beautifully, say beautiful things."

"Who are you?" she said with a note of fear. "What are you? Why do you ask me these questions?" And she made a gesture with her long slim hand, as if crossing herself over the heart.

"I am not Satan," he smiled. "I am a simple Irish gentleman. My name is O'Malley. And I ask you these questions because there is a bond between us."

"What bond?"

"This!" his voice was trembling. "I



UNDER THE LIGHT OF THE MOON THE WHITE ROBE OF
THE RELIGIOUS BLENDED INTO THE SCENE

have never loved a woman in my life, and if I had met you in the world I would have asked you to honor me by marrying me. Because," he said, "religious or not, I love you."

"Don't," she cried, a little sob in her voice, "don't!"

"Why are you here?" he went on. "Did you wish to be a religious? Is it a great feeling within you?"

"I am here," she said, "because a grandfather of mine loved horses and cards too much, and ruined our family, and left our women-folk without portions, and with so little money that if we were to live at all we could not live in the world to which we were born. Since I was seventeen, and that is six years ago, I have known only convents of Anglican sisters."

"Ursula," he said suddenly, "leave it. Come with me."

"My name in religion is Ursula. In the world my name is—was Joan."

"Joan," he pleaded, "come. Leave this back-water where you weep. Leave it. Come with me."

"How could I?" she was trembling.
"How can I?"

"I love you, Joan. Come."

"Would you be good to me?"

"I love you, Joan."

"Would you—would you marry me? You would n't leave me? Please, because my people are great even though they are poor, and no woman of our people has been treated slightly. You would marry me, supposing I come?"

"Oh, Joan," he said, "what beast do you take me for? Why must you say things like that?"

"I know. I know"; her voice was shaky, uncertain. "I am afraid, and one says things—oh, but I could n't. There is no way."

"I shall call on the superior tomorrow."

"Oh, no!" she moaned. "Not that. Promise me, never that? If I thought that, I should make my way down to the water and die."

"Then come with me as you are."

She spread her white arms out.

"But I can't, my dear," she said. "You see how it is impossible? Go away, and thanks, and God bless you."

"Joan," he asked briskly, "what do you need? I can come for you with my big overcoat, and it will cover you from neck to toe. But your hair?"

"My hair is short. It will not matter."

"I can come at midday, and we can catch the evening boat at Kingstown and be in London. And then we can be married."

"But I can't cross to London as I am. Look," she said. "I must get a coat and skirt for a slim woman, and a woman's blouse, and some sort of hat."

"They will be at my mother's house.

At midday to-morrow. I shall be here with the dog-cart and the great coat. Joan, do you hear me, Joan? To-morrow at midday, I shall be here."

"No! No!" she said, "I cannot. You are a strange man. I don't know you. I don't know the world. It would be ugly, after this night. Would it not be ugly, after this night?"

The light of the circling moon came on her face softly, and lit up the loveliness of it, the life in it, the soft, somehow boyish face with the golden eyes and the parted lips.

"To-morrow night, Joan, the moon will shine as brightly as ever. It will shine on us over the Irish Sea. There is no place the moon shines so brightly as on the Irish Sea. And you coming into England in the night-time, and the dark Welsh mountains looming up; and then to go through the peaceful English country-side at dawn, with all the birds of dawn

singing, and the honeysuckle on the country cottages, and into great London while the sun is not yet high. Joan, there is no ugliness."

"When—when does the boat sail?"

"At nine of the evening."

"I could n't," she moaned. "I could n't."

And then she said:

"If you come—" she paused, "you must come later. At four or at five."

And then she asked:

"What is your name?"

"O'Malley," he said. "De Bourke O'Malley."

"De Bourke," she asked, "you will marry me, will you, and be good to me?"

"I will, Joan. I swear it, by God!"

"Then I will marry you, de Bourke. I will come with and marry you, and I will be a good wife to you, de Bourke, as good as I know how."

She had moved forward a little, and

her voice was throbbing, and the moonlight sparkled on the tears that were held in the long hazel lashes of her eyes. And suddenly her soft white face became crimson, and without uttering another word, she turned and fled to soft Drimmond, slumbering under the moon. He could see her white robe shimmering in the green tunnel of the elm-trees.

He waited a moment, listening to the quiet hush of all things in the land. Even his heart was hushed. No bird twittered, no wild thing moved. Silently the great moon sailed through the starry atolls of the sky. And then a little bell broke the silence. The small muffled bell the sisters used to call them to their office of the day. And each in her cell silently woke and recited the Common of Virgins:

“This is a wise virgin, and one of the number of the prudent.

“O Lord my King, I lifted up my supplica-

tion from the earth, and prayed for deliverance from death.

"Full of Grace are thy lips.

"Because God hath blessed thee forever.

"Glory!

"Full of Grace are thy lips.

"In thy grace and in thy beauty.

"Go forth, ride on prosperously, and reign."

CHAPTER VII

AS he paced up and down the dining-room, waiting for her to come down from the room that had been his mother's, the events of the day came back to him, one by one. First, there had been so much business to straighten out, talking to his agent, giving instructions to servants as to how things were to go on in his absence, and all the time wondering whether or not at the last moment she would disappoint him. The buying of clothes for her had been less of an ordeal than he thought, thanks to kindly Dublin people. He had gone into a great shop on Grafton Street and asked diffidently for a coat and skirt for a woman. "And a blouse, too, I think. Yes, just give me those."

The acidulous female attendant looked at him.

"'T is easy said," she mused. "Would she be a tall or a short woman?"

"She would be a tall woman."

"And would she be a thin or a thick woman?"

"She's a slimmish, tall girl."

"'T is a great description."

He looked bothered and foolish.

"Tell me," the attendant asked confidentially, "is it running away with a school-girl you are?"

"'T is something of the kind," he admitted.

"Well, my dear man"—she looked at him reprovingly—"why did n't you say so in the first place, and you'd have got satisfaction. A tall, slim girl! Is she a lady?"

"Yes."

"'T is easy, so. Sit right down. Do you mind the cost?"

"I do not."

He sat down and at intervals she would come to him and ask questions.

"Has she got brushes and combs and the likes of that?"

"I don't think so."

"'T is a good thing you came to me, so."

And a little while later she asked:

"Now about a hat?"

"She's had her hair cut off," he said embarrassedly. He remembered that Joan had told him.

"'T is the scarlet fever the poor child's had. Now there's nothing more womanly in a case like that than a sort of a man's hat, a low felt hat with a woodcock's feather in it. You can leave it to me."

She loaded the dog-cart with bundles.

"Well," she said, "here's the best of luck. 'T is how these marriages turn out grand sometimes. And if it does n't," she

said, "it 'll be a great memory in your old age, how once you walked on the face of the world—not like me, with my complaints and my hobbies, and my old tomcat, and me that never had even a squeeze in the dark."

He drove home the Rathfarnham road, and had his man carry the things up to his mother's room. The acidulous woman had forgotten nothing, not even gloves. He told his man to pack.

"I shall be away to-night for a couple of months. Pack up for me. You are not coming."

"Yes, captain."

"Tell the cook I shall want a light supper, not a dinner, for two. I will be leaving on the boat."

"Yes, captain."

"You will wait on table. None of the Irish servants are to."

"Yes, captain."

"Tell Grogan to put Aspasia in the

shafts, and put my heavy frieze coat on the seat, the one that turns up to the ears."

"Yes, captain."

It was a relief to have a military automaton around in a crisis like this, and not the friendly Irish servants who considered your business theirs. He felt a queer flutter about his heart as he climbed up and took the reins.

"All right. Let go!"

And he was bowling down the road toward Drimmond.

He was not sure until the last moment that she would be there, until he saw her standing under the ancient apple-tree. The full heat of the summer day had passed, and now the sunshine was red gold and the shadows deeper, and a strange blue mistiness coming in the air. The cattle stood in groups of threes or fours. There was no wind.

She looked up calmly as the dog-cart

spun up. There were dark shadows under the golden eyes. Her face was whiter than usual. There was about her a coolness, a calmness, a strength. Her white garment, her broad leathern belt, her steady eyes—she was like some young angel of the Lord.

“You are not coming, Joan?” he said.

“Yes, I am coming,” she had decided. “Can you bring the dog-cart nearer the wall?”

He turned the mare and came back.

“May I have the coat?” she asked.

He gave her the great frieze coat silently, and as he gave it to her he touched her hand. It was silky and firm and cool, like cool mountain water. She slipped into the coat. For a moment she fumbled at her throat, and the hood dropped beneath the coat's vast collar. And in an instant she was bareheaded under the golden sunshine.

Her hair was ruddy, like the leaves of a copper beech-tree, and riotous with curls. It was lighter than the long beautiful ruddy eyebrows. It glinted in the sunlight as an ancient guinea would glint, somber, most valuable. The head was beautifully shaped, the sweet small roundness of it. And beneath that, the calm white face and golden eyes. She was more like an effeminate boy than a young woman, now she was wrapped from chin to toe in the great frieze coat. She did not look back on Drimmond for an instant. All her face, all her soul was forward. She slipped from the wall on to the seat of the dog-cart, lightly as a deer steps. Her small black brogues twinkled for an instant, and she had sprung down into the cart and was sitting beside him.

"Shall we go now?" she asked.

He could not speak, so overcome was he by the beauty of her head, by the

greatness of her daring and her faith. He shook the reins slightly, and the little trotting-mare was off, throwing her feet forward, proudly, firmly, as though she knew she were carrying beauty great as Dido's.

She spoke as they swung toward Dundrum:

"De Bourke, when we get married, do you mind if it is in a registrar's office?"

"Joan, wherever you wish."

"Because I do not think that I could stand a church any more."

And again she spoke when they came into Shanganagh gates:

"Is this your house, de Bourke?"

"Your house and mine, Joan."

"Thanks, de Bourke. It is a sweet house."

He brought her to his mother's room. She stood looking about her. Her hands were deep in the pockets of the great

frieze coat. She seemed more of a masquerading boy than ever. And she smiled.

"I shall be ready in an instant, de Bourke."

He left her, and now was waiting in the mellow dining-room. For all that summer was in it, a little fire was burning in the grate, as the Irish custom is, some relic of ancient mysticism rather than a protection against the cold. The last of the sun glinted on the Irish silver, and the Irish glass, and the boards that shone like a racing-horse's coat. He was pacing up and down the room, in a sort of dazed admiration. Out of what great strain was this woman sprung, who had such beauty, and such daring, and who never looked back once the decision was taken? What was her name in the world? Who was she, this woman he was going to marry?

The door opened quietly, and she stood,

no longer in overcoat or in religious dress, but in her costume of heather-colored tweed, her soft champagne-colored blouse. Her head was bare, and in hand she held her jaunty felt hat that was to cover those curls as of an antique Venetian lady's. She was tall and beautiful and lissome—the long sweet line from waist to knee, from knee to ankle, the small gentle bosom, the neck a living pillar, its beautiful proportions to the lovely face and head. A little blush came over her cheekbones, and for the first time that day her voice was uncertain.

“Am I—am I—good enough for you, de Bourke? You do not want to send me back to Drimmond?”

He moved toward her and took her hand—it was warm now and firm and strong—and bent over it and kissed it, and as he kissed he could feel the life in it, warm, pulsating.

“Neither I, who am no longer a boy

and have seen much of the world, nor this old house, which is very old and has seen generation on generation of Irish—neither I nor this old house, Joan, have ever dreamed of anything more beautiful.”

CHAPTER VIII

ONE of the peculiarities of the old gentleman, as he went on his walks through Dublin, was his dislike of Italians. Though he was not of the Roman faith, yet the good-natured Irish priest and he had no differences. The Irish clergy are a race of walkers; one meets them everywhere going quietly about their meditations, or reading their office. And always between them and the old gentleman there passed an affable greeting; that is, as affable as the old gentleman could make it. His wintry smile, a smile as of pale winter sunshine passing over his frost-killed face, and his gruff “ ’d afternoon” were well meant, well taken. But let an Italian cleric, such as appear not unoccasionally in Dublin, cross his path, and that

day was marked with a black stone. Against itinerant Italian organ-men he seethed with hatred; and when an opera company came and took a theater and gave in it Italian operas of the lighter kind, such as *Dublin loves*, that theater did not see the old man for a good four months, so long does it take an old man's resentment to die.

And strangely enough, of all Italy his anger was mostly centered against the city, men, and products of Venice, which is a strange thing in an Irishman, for to them Venice spells romance and liberty, and liberty of the kind we Irish like—it will be said if it must be said—liberty for ourselves and damned little for any one else. There is a mystic quality about wedding the sea with a ring that appeals to us Celts. And the travelers, poets, and soldiers of Venice bring applause from our hearts, for we have travelers, soldiers, and poets, too. But we are a poor peo-

ple, and the poor, one cannot but notice, get little credit for anything. Yet there are traitors among us who hold that Venice is a more beautiful city than Dublin.

You will hear all these matters discussed in the drinking-houses of Dublin, among other subjects such as whether speed on the flat is to be more admired in a horse than skill in jumping, as whether the Golden Age of Pericles ever came up to any period in Irish history for poets and orators, as to whether Professor Einstein's theory of relativity was new or was n't it all in "th' ould Irish manguscrips." Matters which in more serious countries are debated by learned societies are in Ireland solved in pubs. But speak of the beauty of Venice in a drinking-house, and you drew the old man, Mr. Moore, out of his all but impregnable taciturnity.

"Venice," he would bellow, "is a most abominable sewer." Having stated

which, and glared at the company, he would stalk out.

The old man could always be drawn by a discussion on Venetian glass, which he held was an excellent thing on the table of ex-pawnbrokers, but Waterford glass was the only thing for a gentleman's establishment. A poet raving at a bar about the beauty of Venetian ladies, their torrent of red-gold hair, would nauseate Mr. Moore.

"I would rather, sir—" he would be shaking with anger—"have a red-headed Connemara peasant woman in her shawl and bare feet, than all the Venetian ladies that ever polluted the world."

Now, however patriotic you may be, this proposition is ridiculous. But the old man's fury gave it a certain dignity. The slow-burning anger of old men is a terrible, a pathetic thing to see. An old man's mind is a microcosm of the world, of the world's history. Once the glitter-

ing sea of romance covered this sward, these blue gleaming rocks; but the poles of existence change, the sea recedes, the earth grows dry and arid. But there remains in the soil some beautiful sleek sea-thing caught by the recession of the waters. It dies, mummifies, fossilizes, and when we excavate it, of the beautiful, sleek, sea-thing that once roamed the waters, there remains only a terrifying skeleton with a satanic grin. Such are in the minds of old men, of old baffled men.

CHAPTER IX

WHEN she gave him her name for the license, and they were married by the dingy registrar, and she had signed the thumbled dirty book with its record of unions, Joan Bruce-Bennett, O'Malley understood why she did not wish to remain in London. They were now Captain and Lady Joan O'Malley. And the marriage of the daughter of the Marquis of Clancolin to an unknown Irish soldier, especially when she had fled from a convent with him, would have been food for the newspapers for days. For the Bruce-Bennetts were an old Scottish family whose name newspaper readers were quite familiar with. The present marquis was a recluse in Aberdeen, where, it was said, he was slowly drinking himself

to death. The marchioness had eloped, leaving him and the children, to go with some Portuguese noble, and she was now the Princess Something-or-other, poverty-stricken, old, and hag-like, who lived for the baccara rooms of Belgium in the summer and for those of the Riviera, an ancient woman with glittering eyes who looked as if she had sold herself to the devil, so yellow she was, so uncanny was her luck when her luck was in. Of Joan's two brothers, one was dead with the Prince Imperial of France in the Zulu war, and the other, Viscount Kilbeggan, had gone off to Florida to work an orange-farm, where he had failed. He was now clerking in a small store in Jacksonville. Later, when his father died, he would return to be a poverty-stricken beau of Cannes and Piccadilly, to make a dubious income by lending his name to the directorate of dubious companies, to be hired by some of the lesser known continental

casinos to play there in winter to draw solid bourgeois money by the flame of his title. A sorry ending to a once great name.

O'Malley felt a little chill as he saw the name. The change from the anonymous Sister Ursula to the daughter of a doomed, and, some folk said, of a mad family disturbed him. He had thought he was doing the simplest, the most natural thing in the world in carrying off and marrying this glorious young woman, who he felt was being wasted for the world, for nature. Now he sensed himself in a different atmosphere, an air of queer passions and ancient histories. Her grandfather, he knew, had ruined himself on the race-track, and her mother had been one of the mad Gordons. And her great-grandfather, so it was rumored, had been a queer sort, dabbling in alchemy and diabolism—things that might be silly, but which carried a morbid, an

evil atmosphere about with them. In the hinterland of his mind these things rose, dark and ominous.

But when he looked at her, they vanished. There she stood, slim, virginal. Her long sweet hands, her sweet mouth, her beautiful golden eyes, and that crop of russet curls that seemed so as nature had intended them, compared to the rolled dressed tresses of the Victorian age. It seemed to him that other women, with their elaborate locks, were over-female. They suggested closed windows, stuffy rooms. The cropped curls of Joan were like the leaves of trees moved by the wind, natural, free, rhythmic as nature herself.

And, free and natural though she was, there were about her the grace and dignity, the quiet smile and sureness one sees nowhere else except, to use that beautiful old-time phrase, in a lady of quality.

She had a freedom in her mind, too,

rare in her age. She looked at him once in her brave way.

"My lover," she said quietly, "do you mind buying me clothes and things? I am a poor bride for you, the poorest that ever came out of our old poor house." She smiled. "And what little money I have was given over to the sisterhood. I don't know if I could get it again," she thought, "but I think you'd rather I didn't ask."

"Joan," he told her, "please don't speak of that again."

"All right, my lover," she answered him.

Great days and great times in London those. Old Thames sailed onward like a consciously dignified swan to the sea, not as Anna Liffey flows, careless, Irish. The little Germanish queen rode about attended by her mysterious Indian attendant, white-turbaned, aloof, while behind her trotted the Life Guards, tall men in white helmets and red coats with flowing

golden mustaches, just as if they had trotted out of their pictures in some book for children. And Mr. Wilde's vain tortured genius soared across the heavens like some beautiful doomed star, and out of the East rose the wonder of Mr. Kipling. And Eleanora Duse and Madame Bernhardt played on opposing stages under the acid gaze of a young Irish critic called Bernard Shaw. Diplomats wore decorations they had received from royalty, as of Portugal, as of Russia, as of the German emperor, as of the sultan of Turkey. Old days, far-away days these, less modern than those of the Egyptian king whose grave has been raped to be a side-show for rich insensitive folk. And Ireland was a great romantic country, proud in defeat. And the iris and water-lilies of the Thames were more beautiful, more luxurious than now—so long was this ago.

She told him: "My lover, if it had not

been for you I would still have been in Drimmond like some hermit on a small rock in the sea. I' would have had the gulls, the brown-eyed seals, the green or blue of white-capped water, and it would have been all very beautiful, but it would not have been life. The swarms of Piccadilly, the sweet line of Regent Street, the hill where St. Paul's is, with all the little lanes, the ancient names, I should never have known those. Even had I not entered Drimmond"—she looked at him with her golden eyes that were now warm and lighted, such affection did they hold—"I should not have known this, for poverty is so straitening, de Bourke, and there is nothing so pathetic as the poverty of the great. In Scotland still, de Bourke, Clancolin is a great name. And I should have remained in the Highlands, the Lady Joan Bruce-Bennett, with all my empty gentility, mending my own stockings possibly, de Bourke, for my little income

would be spent on the poor, and on the heathen, de Bourke"—she laughed her light golden laughter—"and going in for solemn archery tournaments against very serious Glasgow professors with spectacles, or playing croquet with colonels of the Indian army; retired, peppery old men, de Bourke. And some botch-faced young Scots clergyman might have asked my hand in holy matrimony in hopes that one day he would become a minor bishop, and I, de Bourke"—she laughed again—"might have accepted him, so sick do even ladies become of single blessedness. But you have taken me from all that, de Bourke, and put me in the middle of life, and the Scots clergyman would have been gray and dreary, dreary; and the life of the church is cold and beautiful, but cold, de Bourke. And the life you have given me is so warm and comforting."

"It is the life for which you were intended, young Joan." He put his hand on

her curly head, and bent down and kissed her. She caught his other hand and pressed it to her heart. "And you will see Paris, and the south of France, with its orange-trees, and palms, and olives, and figs, and little Monte Carlo, and Italy where everybody goes who cares for life and beauty."

"And shall we go soon, my dear?" she asked. "For here, you know, I am afraid. I am afraid of being discovered, de Bourke; of my father, of the people who own newspapers. Please, de Bourke, let us go."

"We shall go at once, young Joan."

"I will not keep you from your country, de Bourke, any longer than necessary. For though I am foreign I love Ireland myself. And your house is such a sweet house, and I have seen so little of it, de Bourke. There is a long room there with a place for a great fire. It was your mother's room. May I have it—shall we

have it, de Bourke, when we return? There is a copper beech outside it, that should be always whispering, and from its windows one should see the blue mountains, and the moon."

"Shall we go back now, Joan?"

"Heart, no!" she shook her head. "Shall I tell you when we will go back, my dear?" She looked at him bravely. "When I shall have a little son of yours, my dear, a little son who will grow up like you, fair and curly-headed, tall and strong, and you shall make of him a gallant Irish gentleman, for one day he may be Marquis of Clancolin, and our poor doomed house may take on strength and life and dignity. If there were a little boy of ours, de Bourke, I should not be afraid of returning, nor of passing Drimmond, and hearing the Angelus bell. Where there is a strong child, de Bourke, there is neither morbidity nor fear.

"And there shall be a little girl in

Ireland, too, de Bourke, a sunny-faced little girl, with a smile like yours, and curls the color of the beech-tree in your mother's garden. . . ."

She turned away slowly, slowly drawing her hand from his. "There is a letter I must write, de Bourke. . . ." And he watched her as she sat down to write. The russet head was like a chrysanthemum on its stalk. The curve of her neck, the little hint of the spinal column above the collar of the dress, all seemed so graceful, so strong. Each movement of hers was significant, fitted with music.

"I am writing, de Bourke," she told him, "to the Abbess of Drimmond to tell her that Joan Bruce-Bennett is now Joan O'Malley, and is happy and proud to be Joan O'Malley, and that Joan O'Malley is sorry to have hurt and worried them, but that Sister Ursula is dead."

"I am glad, Joan. Glad you did that. You are so straight and honest, Joan. I

don't think you ever told a lie in your life."

The head was bent over the desk, so that he could not see that her face flushed red and then became white with a white not of vitality but of fear.

CHAPTER X

THEY visited Paris, but not the Paris of to-day with its neurasthenia of taxicabs, hysteria of buying and selling, but that pleasant Paris of old, with its horses trotting stately along the boulevards, bearded funny Frenchmen, and perfumed funny Frenchwomen. The floridness of the Second Empire still hung about it, like the Indian summer of a summer we know is gone. There was leisure in this Paris of old. The breakfasts, the luncheons on the boulevards, the Seine passing under its ornate bridges—they felt they had been translated somehow into some city of the clouds. Night came in a flash of light that made tawny London seem some provincial town. Here they were free as in London or

Dublin they would never have been free. Days passed. A little chill crept into the air. Soon the birds would be going southward, and they would be going, too.

Under the cunning of French modistes, Joan's beauty and personality grew. Here her cropped curls attracted no curiosity but were a beauty. She had not the cold anemic look of Englishwomen, or the now brooding, now brilliant temperament of the Irish, or the comeliness of Frenchwomen, like some blowing flower. She seemed fire that did not burn, the burning bush that was not consumed. She was like Artemis, the soft virginal goddess of the dusk, over whose forehead is a star. To the Parisian people, she was something to stop for and admire when she showed her face.

But to her husband she was warmth and love. The mouth that was so beautiful was soft and vibrating. And when she spoke to him in love there was

a note in her voice that was like some heart-stirring note on the violoncello. Her arms were firm and white, and from her russet curls came the perfume of apples. There was no unharmony between them. When night fell, and even Paris slept under its flare of light, they would come out on the balcony of their rooms in the hotel and watch the city unfold itself beneath them. Though not touching each other, though not seeing each other, each was aware of the other. There was a high sense of exultation in them, of exaltation as though they were on a high mountain peak in the blue gloaming.

Besides love, there was an immense friendship between them. Each knew the other for brave, for strong, for honest. They had the ways of friends, as well as the ways of lovers. The clear voice of her calling to him in the daytime was a friend's voice. His touch on her shoulder

was a friend's touch. At times they were casual, as friends are.

One night, coming in from the balcony, he said to her, so much care was her soul to him, as well as body and peace of mind:

"Joan, don't you say your prayers any more?"

She turned and looked at him. Her features crisped, grew a trifle hard, and she answered, "No!"

"I thought everybody said prayers," he went ahead; he was not looking at her. "Even I, heathen that I am, say my prayers. There was a prayer my mother taught me as a child, a child's prayer, and somehow or other, I can never get it out of my mind when I turn in for the night."

She had gone out on the balcony again, and after a little silence her "Yes?" as though she were n't very much interested, came toward him, came floating into the room toward him.

"Four angels around my bed" [he remembered].

"One angel at my head,

"One to watch and one to pray,

"One to keep foul things away.

"Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,

"Bless the bed that I lie on."

"I don't understand"—he went about the room, dropping a dinner-jacket here, a dress-tie there—"but I never go to sleep without saying it. Childish, Joan, what?"

There came no answer from the balcony.

"Now I lay me down to sleep,

"I pray the Lord my soul to keep.

"And if I die before I wake,

"I pray the Lord my soul to take.

"Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,

"Bless the bed that I lie on.

"I suppose every child in the world says something like it, but it's funny to

think of it remaining with a grown man. Is n't it, Joan?"

For the first time he noticed she had left the room. He saw her white frock on the balcony, where she leaned over the railing, her head bowed.

"Come in, Joan," he told her. "It's getting cold. You'll be chilled there."

She came in at last. Her face was white. She was shivering.

"It is cold," she said quietly. "And I have got chilled for a moment. De Bourke, please take me in your arms and make me warm again."

CHAPTER XI

THEY went southward and overtook the sun. Drowsy French towns, sluggish rivers; broad-hipped southern women, with the dreamy eyes of cats; small consequential men with tended beards, extraordinarily aware of their own importance; white towns, where the Midi sun was a furnace, avenues of lime-trees; cafés with awnings where the waiter brought you an *apéritif*, and the local newspaper on a stick. Queer old churches into which Joan would never go, with statues and carvings in olive-wood. Fishermen in red caps, rolling cigarettes, smoking, sleeping in the sun, while their women-folk mended the light delicately woven sardine-nets. Dramatic sunsets in blue and crimson. Fruit one knew from

the monger's stall here grew in profusion, the golden orange and purple fig, and from the vines the Provençal peasant was gathering the grapes for his small harsh wine. The eery color of the olive-tree, not green, not white, not gray. The Mediterranean was bluer than a blue sky. Small purple sails dotted it. Across the waters one could sense Africa, Corsica. Old towns, half Roman and half Saracen, blinked drowsily in the Midi hills; in their squares were old fountains bringing clear water from the Alpine streams; old trees, old and drowsy as the towns' selves. And the language they spoke here was neither French nor Italian nor a mixture of both, but a strange patois. Early in the evening the townspeople went to their sleep, and the dim alleyways and queer streets were left to the shades of bearded Gaul and stout Roman and slim African.

Everything was a wonder and a joy to them: this queer old sign outside a bar-

ber's shop; the brazen half-moon that represented the ancient laundresses' plate; the smile of a tubby waiter; the city fathers playing bezique in the evenings in the local café; an old woman riding a donkey, which bore also panniers with rosebuds; a Saracenic arch. So passed these days.

They came, as out of some distant quiet country, into Monte Carlo; and here was modernity, calculated beauty. Here the wood-pigeons thrummed between garden and casino. Here was the little harbor that in mid-season would be filled with yachts. At one end was the prince's palace and the old cathedral, at the other Mr. Blanc's casino. Back of it was La Turbie, the small village whence one could see far into Italy, whence one on a fine day could glimpse Corsica. Up the little paths they made their way, and O'Malley was surprised to find what strength lay in her long slim legs, what vitality in her

small bosom. By cleft and ravine and woodland path they went until they reached the terrace that Augustus Cæsar had made; and thence, at their lunch of omelets and grapes and white wine of the country and coffee that held all Arabia in its scent, they saw Italy like a mirage seen in a desert, a dream-country of wonder, purple and blue. And they would return scrambling down the hillside paths, Mount Agel glowering behind them, to the cheerful bustle of the small capital of the small doll-like principality. So passed these days.

Though October had come, that at home would have been a brooding sullen month, gravid with rain, yet here the sun beat with a heat as of a cheerful fire, and the Mediterranean was warmer now than water in Great Britain ever is. Every morning now he brought her out to swim, to teach her. And though the sea was foreign to her, so much of her life had

been spent in dim cloisters, yet it was not long until she could make her way through the water with comfort. She loved to see de Bourke cut his way in a streak of foam through the blue water, his powerful arms flailing, his curly head half buried. When he was far out there would come to her face a drawn terrified look, that would go away little by little as he drew further inshore. But she said nothing.

And afterward they would lie on the rocks, sunning themselves, quiet as lizards. His face had become browner, and his arms and legs and shoulders werè brown as chocolate, while the sun had bleached his hair until it was nearly flaxen silk. But the sun had been kind to her; only a little had it made her white skin golden, as though powdered with minute specks of fine gold. She seemed like some Nereid of an old Greek poet's dream as she lay there, her copper-colored hair,

cuivre rouge, red copper, her soft golden eyes, and the long rounded legs and sweet arms bare in her green *maillot*, her grotesque small rope-soled bathing-shoes. And somewhere an itinerant musician of Naples was always singing those melodies of Naples that are so banal in Anglo-Saxon countries, but seem part of the theatrical Latin sun and sea. "O Sole Mio!" he would be singing, or "Come Back to Sorrento."

*"Che bella cosa,
Na iurnatae sole—"*

His great guitar would give out throbbing notes as he looked, with an eagle's eyes, toward the sun, or as he faced the sea to sing the love-song of Sorrento:

"Guarda'l mare come bello!"

And toward four in the afternoon the band was always playing outside the casino

the equally sensuous waltzes of Strauss, "The Blue Danube," and "O True Dear Heart." The pigeons fluttered. The green grass of the gardens swayed to the sunset breeze. Lights came like fireflies along the little villages of the coast, Beaulieu, Cap d'Ail, Mentone. A little flood of folk gushed up the steps of the casino, and they would enter and watch the green tables piled with notes and gold and counters, while the great wheel in the middle of the baize spun, in a silence unbroken but for the clicking of the ball; the croupier's hoarse shout of the result; the despondent or exultant faces. Here, although the season would not begin for months yet, were crowds—Greek and South American millionaires, English gentlemen, ancient crones who lived only for the spinning of the wheel, threadbare, who put down each result on a sheet of paper, calculating some abstruse system that would bring them to either wealth or sui-

cide; here Spanish women with great dignity and deep voices. Here the great successes of the world. Here the ghastly failures.

And dinner would pass in the café opposite, and after dinner there would be one of the Italian operas with singers from Milan, the pick of the world. And between acts the glare of the gambling-room lights and the click of the roulette-wheel, and the croupier calling out, "*Dix-sept; rouge, impair, et manque!*" "Seventeen wins, red, uneven, and below the line!" And when all was done, the soft Mediterranean night with a dusk that was like poplin, like blue poplin, the rustle of the wind among the palm-trees, the minute thunder of the waves upon the cliffs. And in the room next O'Malley's Joan was undressing, he could hear her feet moving, now there was no sound, now a little pit-a-pat. In a moment she would enter. So passed these days.

CHAPTER XII

NOW, Monte Carlo is a place through which every one passes and stops. The pilgrimages to Mecca and Jerusalem are rather small fry compared to the annual descent on Monaco. There is in human nature some need of gambling. This luck, which we have seen through a glass darkly, there we will meet it face to face. Hither they come from all parts of the world's globe, the Kalmuck merchant prince who has made a fortune in furs at Nijni-Novgorod, and the Brazilian who has a diamond-mine in his back yard, the British peer of last year's making who has accumulated a fortune in war profits and who wins invariably fortunes at *chemin de fer*, and the Irish peer, whose family has lost fortunes in forlorn hopes

against the Normans, against the Elizabethans, against the Hanoverians, and who can only punt for twenty-franc pieces, and invariably loses. Here they sit side by side, ex-king and superannuated *cocotte*, former grand duke and former grand master of the plumbers' union, mayors, yeggman, and respectable citizens. If you have lost track of friend or acquaintance it is a good idea to write him care of the casino at Monte Carlo.

For months now O'Malley and Joan had neither seen nor met any one they knew, but Monte Carlo was filling up. The waiters put on their better dress-clothes, the pigeons preened themselves, the palm-trees flaunted their plumes a little more arrogantly. And outside the casino O'Malley met Paddy Brabazon.

He was a fat, short, black-headed man, with blue eyes, with keen probing blue eyes, and a habit of holding his chin out arrogantly from having to look up at tall

men. He had a small place in Ireland and was remotely connected with one of the great Irish families. His wife was a thin, tall, gray-headed woman, who wore pince-nez and was cheek by jowl with every non-Catholic cleric in Ireland. She was the sort of woman who organized bazaars to put the heathen in pants. Paddy had come to do a little shrewd gambling at Monte, and she had come to see the dreadful iniquity of the place.

In Ireland or elsewhere, O'Malley would have paid little attention to Paddy Brabazon, for he did n't like the man; but, after months of faces he did n't know, this Irish face with black hair, and blue gray eyes, and ruddy cheeks was like a sight of the beloved Irish mountains.

"Hello, O'Malley, saw your name in the hotel book."

"Oh, hello, Paddy, where did you spring from?"

"Been in England, been in Homburg. Say, so you're married. Captain and Lady Joan O'Malley. Congratulations. Who is she, old boy?"

And he looked up at O'Malley with his keen blue Irish eyes.

"She was Lady Joan Bruce-Bennett, daughter of the Marquis of Clancolin."

"My dear old boy," Paddy protested, "there's something wrong. Clancolin has only one daughter, and she's in a sort of convent in Dublin; I mean to say, one of those Anglican sisterhoods, Caldy monks and what not! My dear old boy," he laughed maliciously, "you've been had."

"She was in a convent," O'Malley smiled, "but she's in Monte Carlo now."

"Came out, did she, what?" His eyes narrowed suspiciously. "But I did n't see anything in the papers about the marriage, old feudal wedding and what not!"

"No," O'Malley said dryly, "you would n't. We bolted and got married in a registrar's office."

Brabazon thought for an instant.

"Oh, I say," he decided, "Anne won't like this."

Anne was the acidulous, important wife.

"Why not?" O'Malley laughed. "It's quite respectable."

"I don't know that it is— What I mean to say is this: she may n't think so. Anne takes religion frightfully seriously. I'm broad-minded and all that sort of thing, but, look here, you bolt off with a sister from a convent, and get married in a registrar's office, and bring her to Monte. It is a bit thick, you know. No respect for religion and what not!"

O'Malley thought to himself, Shall I just knock the little blighter out of his standing into the windows of the café opposite?

"It's going to be most embarrassing

for me," Brabazon went on, "knowing you and what not. You see, we've got the Bishop of Clare along with us, and we've got the Birrs. Old Birr's not bad, but he's under the countess's thumb, and she's fearfully keen. Worse than Anne. My dear old boy," he worried, "I'm afraid I can't know you. Do you mind?"

"Look here, Brabazon"—O'Malley caught him firmly by the collar—"to hell with you and your wife Anne, and with the Bishop of Clare, and Lord and Lady Birr. And you can tell them that from me, and Joan, too." He let go.

"Oh, if you take it that way—" Brabazon said, and scuttled off, all agog with his news.

O'Malley strode down the sunlit Monegasque streets, for an instant furious, and now worried. Here was an angle he had not considered. What were they going to think of the matter in Ireland? The Brabazons were a power in

a way, and so was the Countess of Birr. And the Bishop of Clare was all-powerful. Were they to be ostracized on their return? He felt chilled. Not that he cared for himself, but he had wished to see Joan happy in Shanganagh, with interests and friends; and now, if folk were to behave like this—

But these were exceptions.

Were they? Was he sure? Religion is a queer bond in Ireland. It is more a party banner than a faith. Protestant and Catholic, Tory and Nationalist, they cling together. Folk who have outraged Protestant respectability are outcasts, not because they are disreputable but because they have brought scandal on the ascendancy. The other party can point them out as an example of evil faith and morals. And he and Joan had struck their church in a vital spot.

Lord, he mustn't tell Joan of this! Women take these things so seriously.

He must keep his mouth shut about this encounter.

What a pup that Brabazon was! He was sorry now he had n't taken him quietly down toward the sea and given him a hiding. What a filthy little blighter! Was n't there a story that at school Paddy Brabazon used to lend the boys money at usurious interest? Just like him!

Well, at any rate, they would n't stay long. This was no place for the Bishop of Clare, or the Birrs—though, except for gambling, no less vicious place existed. But they would be on their way soon to patronize Italy, to follow the footsteps of Byron, and to stop at each spot of his pilgrimage raising their hands to Heaven and thanking God He had not made them in Byron's mold. There, but for the grace of God, go Paddy Brabazon and the Bishop of Clare!

But they did not go. The Bishop of Clare found the air medicinal, and Anne

Brabazon found the sight of the iniquitous instructive, and Paddy was successful with his small mean punting, so that they remained. De Bourke and Joan were forever passing them. The party studiously did not see them at first, so that Joan noticed.

"De Bourke, who are those people who avoid us so carefully, the party with the bishop in apron and gaiters?"

"I—I don't know, Joan." He stammered. He was not good at telling lies. She linked her little finger in his as they walked.

"You do know, de Bourke," she said quietly. "Who are they?"

"They are some Irish people, stupid fools."

"They avoid us on account of me, don't they, de Bourke?"

"No, Joan, just because they are fools."

A little shadow came about her eyes, and a furrow in her forehead.

"Do you mind, dreadfully, de Bourke?"

"I? Good Lord, no!" he was surprised. "They are foolish, ill-natured people. I should hate to be with them."

"Then I don't mind either, de Bourke," she smiled once more, and the shadow and the furrow passed. But in a little while they were back again, though she spoke of the Brabazon party no more. Now they always seemed to be meeting them. Driving through Mentone or toward Nice, or in the gardens of Monte Carlo. The bishop and Paddy Brabazon kept their faces turned aside; Anne Brabazon and Lady Birr glared at Joan, Anne with the dreadful hatred of an aging gray woman toward Joan's glorious young womanhood, and the countess with the hatred of one who has known only the muddy shallows of love for one who breasts its deep curling waters. Old Birr with his sheep's face looked on in stupidity—how could such things be?

"Those people," Joan said, "those people are beginning to make me nervous, de Bourke. I wish they 'd go away."

"They make me furious," O'Malley growled.

Brabazon must have told some of the French people, for fast as light the news moved through Monte that Joan O'Malley was a runaway nun. She might have been a cheat at cards, a murderess, a woman of the town, and none would have paid attention to her. But gamblers are a queer folk, and the cult of luck is one of the strongest, most rigid cults in the world. A woman close to whom Joan was standing lost a great deal one afternoon, and when she heard the garbled version of Joan's marriage, she immediately ascribed her bad luck to the proximity of the bad nun. And being good-hearted toward her fellow-gamblers, she told them. If Joan stood behind a player at trente-et-quarante or at baccara,

he got up from his seat. When she punted at roulette the others withdrew their stakes. De Bourke noticed and was furious. Joan as yet did not see. The little maid at the hotel who had been so chatty and smiling became morose, and silent, and fearful.

"I say, de Bourke," Joan uttered quietly one afternoon. "I think people are avoiding me, even strangers."

"Don't be silly, Joan."

"You know it, too." She said no more. But she walked out on her balcony and looked at the blue Mediterranean. O'Malley swore to himself.

"It means avoiding people we know from now on," he said, "for a while anyway. It will soon pass," he told himself. "People forget."

She came in from the balcony, and took his hands.

"May we go away from here, de Bourke? May we go somewhere else?"

Her eyes were all shadows, and suddenly tears sprang from them, like water jetting from a fountain.

"We have been so happy here, de Bourke, you and I, but they won't let us alone.

"Oh, de Bourke," she said. "I have ruined you. Your life is wrecked, and it's all my fault."

He took her in his arms. "Hush, Joan, hush!" He tried to still her sobs. "How foolish of you! How could you ruin my life? It's made glorious by you. Hush, darling, and remember, all people are not like these—"

She ceased her sobbing and looked at him with her haggard golden eyes.

"I know this," she said quietly. "All people are."

CHAPTER XIII

THERE it was in the October sunshine, like some impossible dream come true. There was St. Mark's in St. Mark's Square, its mosaics blazing in the sun. There were the four bronze horses, small, fiery, ready to spring over the parapet into the square. There were the three proud flagstaffs of the old republic. There were St. Mark's doves.

There was St. Mark's lion, high on its pedestal that had been part of the loot of Tyre, the crowning city; there on a sister pillar rose the gaunt form of the elder saint, St. Theodore, standing on the crocodile's back. There was the Doges' Palace, the grim dwelling of the grim governing men. There was Rizza's clock-tower, with its Moorish figures striking

the hour with their hammers. Wonders for artists, wonders for historians, wonders for children. And the tremendous silence of it all. No clump of horses' feet or roar of train. Only the lapping of the waters on the lagoon front. There was the bell-tower of St. Mark's, tall, apart, like a great spear thrust blade upward in the ancient historic stones. Peace was everywhere. It was written on the walls of Venice: *Pax tibi, Marce, Evangelista meus!* Peace to thee, Mark, my Evangelist! Under the high altar, here in this square, Mark slept in peace. Everywhere was peace. Peace and wonder.

Here in this square all the wonder and mysteries of Venice lie. Up the Grand Canal the single high span of the Rialto stood out against the sky; the palaces of the old Venetians stood lapped by water; there they are as Shakspeare imagined them when he wrote of the "Merchant."



THE SINGLE HIGH SPAN OF THE RIALTO

Here are bridges Othello crossed. Afar off is the Ghetto whence Shylock came. Here are the leads where Casanova lay. Here the palace Napoleon used. Here Pietro Aretino, the shameless poet, wrote his abominable tales. Here is the Corte dei Milione, where the Polos spoke to the gaping Venetians of the millions and the wonder of the khan of Cathay. There they are still, the authentic stones. The tall mooring-stakes rise like great rushes in the water. The sun drops. The golden figure on the Dogana turns to every quiver of the Adriatic breeze. On the black gondolas the rowers affix their lamps, their small lamps like votive lamps in a dim church. Night comes. Lights quiver on the black water. The swish of the gondolier's oar, and his cry as he turns the narrow canals. "*A-dèl*," he warns. Now to the right, "*Sia stali*." "*Sia di lungo*," comes an answering cry from around the corner. "Keep straight on."

"*Sia premi!*" "Keep to the left."
"*A-òel! A-òel! A-òel!*" The peace of Mark is over the Adriatic sea.

In other cities the ghosts of these great names would wander the streets, seeking the spots where once they knew happiness or tragedy, as in Dublin old women are forever seeing tragic shades. But in their churches the great doges sleep, still as birds at night. The restless Marco Polo is laid. Hither Napoleon never ventures. For here one of the four great exorcists lie. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are immense names to us, but where lies the mortal dust of the solid Matthew, the florid Luke, the mystic John, no man knows. But here Mark is. From beneath the high altar his presence is in every canal, in every humpbacked street. He is there in the bright sunlight and the gray dawn, and the blackness of the night knows him. The drowsy canals, the florid

palaces, the little black gondolas with their halberd-like prows, all gently they murmur in their sleep:

"Pax tibi, Marce, Evangelista meus!
Peace to thee, Mark, my Evangelist!"

CHAPTER XIV

DE BOURKE had thought, so romantic was the spot, such majesty the ancient city had, that here Joan would be happy for a while. Of late she had been pining a little. The golden eyes were shadowed. Now late October had come, and though Venice was still warm under the sun, there came a chilliness from the water when the sun dropped, and their baths on the sands of the Lido must soon be stopped. At night there was little to do but sit outside the Café Florian, under the shadow of St. Mark's, and listen to the band play saccharine Viennese music. On the Riviera it had been different. At Monte Carlo there was always the tremendous human interest of the rooms where roulette was played. And the baths in the Mediterranean were

different from the baths in the Adriatic; perhaps it was that winter was coming; but different they were. It began to irk O'Malley that he had nothing to do. It was a poor life for an active man, being rowed here and there in a gondola, sitting outside cafés. There came a great homesickness on him for Ireland, for a horse between his legs, for the breeze of Three-Rock Mountain. But there! What could one do? It was impossible!

Joan was becoming silent now. For long periods she would sit thinking. Her face grew whiter, grew strained. She had not the healthy look of either Dublin or Monte Carlo, and de Bourke worried.

"Are you well, Joan? Is anything troubling you?"

"I am well, dear de Bourke," she would smile reassuringly. "I am a little tired, perhaps."

They would walk through the narrow streets, stopping to look at this small

shop, this fountain. They would pass over the Rialto, looking at the dried fruits, the great watermelons, the fish-market with strange Adriatic fish, spotted and striped, and so different from the Atlantic catch. And now they would wander down a little lane that led them nowhere, through crowds of bustling high-voiced Venetians. Here it was dark as in a cellar. The little shops were like occult dens of monsters in a dream. The dull gleam of the bronze pans in the pewterers'; the strange titbits on the bench of the shop marked "*Vendita Frittale*"; the casks of wine in the wine-shop; old clothes—God knows what. And in every shop the gleam of a lamp before a print of the Virgin. Above, if you looked up, there was a cleft of blue in the sky. But here all was dark, dark and swarming. They would fight their way out and call for a gondola, and getting out of the riot and bustle of the Grand Canal, they would

drift down the quiet Rio de San Lucca, where no sound was heard but the cry of the gondolier as he turned the narrows, "*A-òel, a-òel, a-òel!*"

Into the churches he could not persuade her to go.

"But you are silly, Joan. You are morbid. You must come."

"Please, de Bourke. Please don't ask me." There was a heart-wringing look in her eyes. "Ask me anything but that."

"But nearly all that is to be seen in Venice is in the churches, Joan, my darling!"

"Please, please, de Bourke."

"Very well, then, little Joan."

So that of Venice now all the churches were barred to them: Santa Maria della Salute, which was raised as a thank-offering for a delivery from the Levantine plague, and where Titian's great plague-picture dwarfs the high altar; San Gregorio; San Trovaso; San Sebastiano, who

was shot with arrows and died later beaten to death with clubs, and here Paolo Veronese is buried; Santa Maria del Carmine, over whose door two peacocks drink from a vase; San Pantaleone; the vast Frari; San Giovanni Evangelista, where the famous relic of the holy cross was held; San Rocco, the French saint, whose body was stolen by the Venetians, and who rests here without his little dog, and here also is his staff, his honest wooden staff, now covered with silver, poor honest St. Rocco, without his staff and little dog; San Salvatore; San Giovanni Crisostomo; Santa Maria dei Miracoli, which is incased in marble within and without; Santa Maria Formosa; Santi Giovanni e Paolo, where the dead bodies of the doges lay in state; San Francesco della Vigna, which occupies the spot, so legend goes, where the holy Mark landed in life on his way from Aquileia; San Zaccaria, where so many other saints are bur-

ied, St. Tarasius, St. Nereus, St. Achilleus, St. Sabina; San Giorgio degli Schiavoni—St. George of the Dalmatians, for the burial of poor Dalmatian sailors; St. George of the Greeks, with its Greek Holy of Holies; San Giovanni in Bragõra; San Giovanni Eleemosinario, the swarthy Egyptian saint; San Cassiano; Santa Maria Mater Domini.

All of these were closed to them. Closed to them were the Madonna dell' Orto, where Tintoretto's "Last Judgment" strikes terror to the most skeptical heart; Santa Caterina; Santa Maria dei Gesuiti; San Marciliano; San Giorgio Maggiore, where is buried Stephen the Martyr, and whither the doges of Venice made a pilgrimage on St. Stephen's day; the Redentõre, which is a votive-offering against another plague; San Giobbe, in whom one hardly recognizes the ancient Hebrew sufferer, in the heart of the Venetian Ghetto; Sant' Alvise; San Pietro

di Castello, with its campanile of white marble, and with its old marble patriarchal chair brought from Antioch, and covered with Arabic inscriptions from the Koran. And here is buried San Lorenzo Giustiniana, Venice's first patriarch. Closed to them was San Lorenzo, where the Armenian monks pray, which was Byron's refuge.

Closed to them, by Joan's plea, were the little churches beloved of poor Venetians, San Giuliano; San Lio; San Moisè, where is buried a sinner, John Law, of the Mississippi Scheme, on whom be peace! San Simeone Piccòlo; Santa Fosca; Santa Maria del Rovario; San Biagio; San Felice; Sant' Apoual; Sant' Elena; Santo Staë; San Michele, on its little island.

And closed to them was St. Mark's, where, under the high altar, the Evangelist, Paul's friend, slept while Venice whispered:

"Pax tibi, Marce, Evangelista meus!"

CHAPTER XV

BETWEEN them now there grew silences, and sometimes de Bourke noticed on Joan's face the trace of tears. He asked her once or twice about it, but she deftly evaded answering. There was still and always the quick firm hand-clasp, the warm lovely kiss. The nights were not as yet too cold. The moon rose full over Venice, and on the funeral gondolas they floated through the marine city, down the Grand Canal, past the ancient dim palaces, under the Rialto, where now all was quiet, and they would swing into the back-water of the Rio della Fava. All was dead; all quiet. Only the call of the gondolier: "*A-òel! A-òel!*" A splash of oars, and they were in the Rio dei Palazzo, and the Sospiri, the Bridge of

Sighs, lay a bar across the brightness of the moon. And as one went under it, one shivered, so large and grim loomed the Ducal Palace, so heavily did the one word "*sospiri*" lie on one's bosom. And then the flash of an oar, and one was under the Paglia, and into St. Mark's Canal once more. There was nowhere else to go but wander in the square, see the four horses gleaming in the moonlight, see the three great flagstaffs rise; the four little emperors embracing, huddled, afraid, afar from native Africa; St. Theodore tall and gaunt above his crocodile; St. Mark's lion proudly facing St. Mark's resting-place. Then they went to their hotel.

Of life now in this city there was none. Nor any noise. The peace of Mark covered Venice gently as a nurse covers a child.

The deep feeling of Paris and the gaiety of Monte Carlo had left them.

When they were in their rooms she would drop her fine Venetian shawl from her gleaming shoulders, like ivory, like sun-warmed ivory, and with a sort of weariness she would run a comb through her curly locks. De Bourke was worried. He made her sit down and took her hands.

"Are you unhappy, Joan?"

She looked at him for a full minute before answering and then said nothing, but nodded.

"Is it this place, Joan?"

Her eyes were full of tears, and she nodded again.

"Why, little Joan?"

"It 's this, de Bourke," she said; "when I was in Drimmond, all was beautiful, do you see, very unreal, but very beautiful. When St. Mark's day came we used to say the Common of Apostles: 'Light perpetual shall shine upon thy saints, and an ageless eternity, Alleluia!' And I used to sing: 'Daughters of Jeru-

saalem, come forth and behold the Martyr with the diadem—' And, de Bourke, it was so beautiful, and unreal; and here it is real, de Bourke. And on St. Stephen's day I would sing the antiphon: 'The heavenly portals are opened to Christ's martyr' "—her voice was low and husky and almost a whisper—"blessed Stephen, who of all the saintly throng is the first in order, and therefore he reigneth triumphant, crowned in Heaven, Alleluia! And he is buried here, de Bourke, and Mark is buried. Their very bones are beneath our feet. I thought it all so beautiful, and now I know it for real."

"Don't be silly, Joan," he commanded sharply.

"Dear heart," she said quietly, "I am not silly. When I lie here at night, alone, the doors between our rooms open, I do not sleep. The churches and the saints take entities, and are outside my window, reproaching me and some cursing

me for what I have done, until I can stand it no longer, de Bourke, and I come into your room and sit by your bed in a chair, and you are sleeping, de Bourke, soundly, quietly as a child, and where you are there is safety, and I sit there until dawn breaks, and I go into my room then."

"Good God, my poor Joan!"

"I had thought, de Bourke, that some one would soon come, who would make all the difference in the world, a little child of yours and mine, de Bourke, and I have been waiting, waiting for my body to quicken, and I could have prayed night, noon, and morning for that, but prayer is forbidden me. De Bourke, do you know that that child will never come?"

"Dear Joan, it will. It will come, and you will be happy as a lark again, and all these morbid fancies will leave you, and you will forget your antiphons and lauds in singing cradle-songs, and you will forget the churches in Shanganagh. The trees

of Shanganagh, Joan, are worth all the dim gray churches in the world."

"It will never come, de Bourke. I know now. I know it for a surety, because I am accursed." She let her head fall.

He took her in his arms and raised her chin, looking into her eyes.

"Joan, what nonsense is this?"

"It is not nonsense, de Bourke. Listen, heart, here is a city full of honeymoon people. Here is the happiness of the bride. But what is back of that, de Bourke? See the solid thing back of it, the sense of children, home, respect, honored life in the future. With me, with us, dear heart, it has been the blaze of happiness, but it is the blaze of sun on water. And now, de Bourke, the sun is out. I love you, but I have brought a blight on your life."

He kept her close in his arms. Against anything without he could have protected

her, but those thoughts, those emotions within, he felt himself futile in combat with them, and with a chill, a sense of failure, he remembered stories he had heard of the Clancolin family, of the profligate men, and the queer women—they were mad, all Scotland said, a doomed house.

“I must get you away from here, Joan.”

“Where?” Her voice was hopeless.

“Somewhere. I shall think of a place. Somewhere you will get well, Joan, rid of these morbid fancies.”

“Will it do any good, de Bourke?” she asked.

“Of course it will,” he said bravely. “Of course it will, dear Joan.” But his heart fell dull and unresponsive to his own words.

CHAPTER XVI

IT was to be their last day in Venice. The sun was hazy; a little wind swept through the closed canals and tiny streets, hot, stifling. "Sirocco!" the Venetians murmured to one another as they passed along. No matter! Soon the *bora*, the keen northwest wind, would come down from the Dolomites, and the foreigners would depart and leave the Venetians to their quiet occult life of small canals and high houses and little dreaming streets. Joan had had the great trunks packed, and they wandered out into the Square of St. Mark.

"Poor de Bourke!" she said suddenly. "You have never been in St. Mark's."

"I don't mind, Joan," he said.

"My poor dear," she looked at him.

"I have been so selfish. And you have been so loyal. Dear heart, go in, and see it. You must n't leave Venice without seeing it."

"It 's all right, Joan. We 'll both see it one day, when you feel better."

"You shall see it now, my dear." She paused for a moment. "I 'll go in with you," she said bravely.

"Joan," he turned to her, "if you do that, all these morbid fancies will leave you. Things you are afraid of, when you face them, they are nothing."

"Then I 'll go in, de Bourke," she said. Her face was very white, her mouth compressed.

Out of the loud square where the doves crooned and swept overhead with small thundering wings, they entered the dim place of St. Mark's rest. They passed over the three slabs where great Barbarossa knelt to the arrogant Alexander; they passed the chapel where great Dan-

dolo, conquerer of Constantinople, lies; the long dim perspectives of St. Mark's came to them, a blaze of color and gold. Joan disengaged her hand from her husband's arm, so that he should not notice her trembling. They advanced on the high altar past the domed lectern whence the Second Crusade was preached. Overhead the blaze of the mosaics' glory. Everywhere was silence, not the gloomy terrifying silence of the tomb, but the silence of peaceful rest.

They passed through the little gate into the high altar. The great golden altar-screen gleamed dully, like a great eye, alive but half awake. The twisted alabaster columns from Solomon's Temple writhed like strange sacrificial snakes. Here was a silence, like the unendurable silence between stars. De Bourke's iron nerve was shaken.

"There," he whispered. He pointed beneath the high altar.

There the body of Mark lay, Mark who had known Peter, who was the right-hand man of Christ who was crucified.

He heard a slight moan beside him, and when he turned to see, her face was twisted in agony. Her brow was glistening wet with sweat, and her face had passed white and seemed a gray that verged on green. And out of this tortured mask, her eyes, her tortured eyes implored him.

"Come out, Joan; for God's sake come out," he cried. And regardless of place or time, he caught her up and carried her from the high altar through the old miraculous church, through the vestibule into the air. A small crowd gathered.

"Put me down, please, de Bourke," she said.

He helped her walk toward their hotel under the arches of the old library. The sirocco blew toward them, heavy and languid, with the suggestion of dry air out

of a furnace. He made her go directly to their rooms.

"Lie down and rest, Joan," he told her. "I shall never forgive myself for bringing you in there."

She was better now. Her face was white, but under her golden eyes were great blue rings. Her hands were restless. She looked at him.

"I must tell you something."

"Later, Joan, when we are away from Venice."

"No, now, de Bourke!" She looked at him pleadingly. "Don't you see I must tell you now?"

"What is it, then, Joan dear?"

"You see, de Bourke, you don't understand all this—this feeling of a religious who is a religious no more. How could you, de Bourke? You are a soldier and an Irish gentleman; but, de Bourke, do you see? When one is brought up to that in youth, one never gets rid of it.

"De Bourke, can you imagine what it is for a religious to be professed? She is a maid. For weeks before the profession she looks forward to it, as girls in the world look on their wedding. It is a wedding, you know, de Bourke, a mystic, spiritual wedding, with— You are His, you see, forever."

"Yes, I think I see, Joan."

"And there is a ceremony, de Bourke, that is a mystical wedding. You know, de Bourke," she said nervously, "that in Heaven are no earthly marriages, but this marriage is to last for eternity. One has one's little bridesmaids. One has all the pomp of weddings, and they say this: 'The kingdom of heaven is liken'd unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls: who when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all he had and bought it—' "

"Joan, Joan, my dear," he pleaded. "Don't excite yourself!"

"But, de Bourke, listen. I must tell you. And then a nun sings: 'At the Bridegroom's coming, the wise virgin, being ready, went in with him to the marriage.'

"And then all sing: 'The virgins that be her fellows shall bear her company.

" 'And shall be brought unto thee.'

"And then, de Bourke, the bishop cuts off your hair, and when you hear it fall on the marble floor about you, then you know, suddenly, terribly, that you are married, that there will never be a home for you but this cold nunnery, that no laughing children will be got on your body. Oh, de Bourke, it is terrifying."

"But Joan, my darling, you have avoided all that. Why must you worry? Look, my dear, all the world is before us."

She made a helpless gesture with her hand.

"I lied to you, de Bourke," she said wearily. "The bishop cut off my hair."

She turned around to him. She sprang to her feet, her eyes dilated.

"My God, de Bourke, don't look at me like that. Don't! Don't! I can't bear it."

"I am not looking at you in any way, except love," he took her in his arms for shelter. "Joan!" he said, "my poor Joan!"

CHAPTER XVII

OF all the strange things about the old gentleman, Mr. Moore, there was nothing stranger than this, that he would not accept the popular doctrine that the woman pays. In Ireland, of all countries, to take issue with so evident a theorem is to proclaim oneself mad. First, it is a chivalrous country, where nothing must be said against women, where after the toast of "The King," or "The Republic"—have your own way—is drunk, the next is "The Ladies—God bless them!" Secondly, it is a romantic country, where the old tradition of the beautiful man on horseback who breaks the village maiden's heart and rides away, is notably extant. Thirdly, it is against the evidence of our

eyes in Ireland, where men go to race-courses while women stay at home; where men congregate about bars, while women congregate in church. Therefore, Mr. Moore's stand was most damnable heresy.

On the rare occasions on which Mr. Moore could be drawn, this subject was the one to draw him on. It was much better than Italy, or, to be more concrete, the ancient glory of Venice or its present sensuous beauty. He would instance names of women who in ancient and modern history had been among the destructive forces of the world, from apocryphal Delilah to the sordid trull who had killed the cold, the great Mr. Parnell. For one Joan of Arc there were ten Cleopatras; for one mother of the Gracchi there were ten Messalinas. It must be admitted that Mr. Moore made a case.

As to the rider on the horse and the village maiden, Mr. Moore was cynical. He stated this, that the agricultural

population knew more about life than the middle classes or the gentry. They were closer to the soil, to animals, whereas all true romantics came from the upper strata of society. Indeed, Mr. Moore stated, it would be much more difficult to start a village maiden on a life of impropriety than a burgess's wife or daughter, or a lady of quality. If perchance, Mr. Moore said, a village maiden permitted the advances of one above her station it was, to use a vulgarism, on the chance of roping him in. A burgess's family will have middle-class ambitions, and a lady of quality a sensitive heart, either of which may lead them astray; but the village maiden has the shrewd hard sense of the peasant. He adduced as evidence the number of men who had married their tenants' daughters, of promising careers ruined by holy wedlock with barmaids, of chorus-girls now countess of this, duchess

of that—where were their husbands now? In the gutter of society. Without taking sides in this matter, it is easy to see there is not a little in Mr. Moore's contention.

As to why husbands went about to races, and husbands frequented bars while their wives attended church, Mr. Moore said this, that women were not a sporting section of humanity. They went to races to show off dresses, to see society. If it rained, if the race-courses were far off and difficult of access, you would not find them there. Also, he said—and this was shocking to the ears of the audience, and properly so—religion could be as great a vice as drinking. He could, he muttered darkly, a tale unfold, but that was none of anybody's damned business! Here, it might be noted, Mr. Moore grew more heated as the discussion went on.

Women, it was urged, he would continue, had to put up with the difficulties

of child-bearing and housekeeping, but that was natural to women since time immemorial. But what of man? He had to work to support the house and the children. And labor in modern conditions was not the natural inheritance of man. Distinguished anthropologists had written that man was destined for war and the chase, not for the abominably sedentary occupations of stock-broking, lawyering, what not. Also, he drew their attention to this, that many a man in this present bar was here for comfort and human relationship because his home housed a bitter scold. To this assertion the audience was decently silent. A woman, he said, was always prating about her love for children. Did a man, then, have no love for them? Did not a man desire a little son?

And he would wander for a while talking of those dreadful insects of M. Henri Fabre's, the female of whom eats her

mate when she has had her desire of him. He would tell the horrible history of the eel.

"The woman pays!" he would sneer. "No, damn all your eyes! The man pays!"

"Now, Mr. Moore! Now, Mr. Moore," the suave barman would appeal, laying his hand gently on Mr. Moore's arm.

"Keep your hands off me, you Waterford pigs' nurse!" Mr. Moore would growl.

"Now, Mr. Moore! Now, Mr. Moore!"

Mr. Moore would gulp his drink down, and glaring inimically, even truculently, at the assembled toppers, would stamp out. After he went the consensus of opinion was that at one period of his life he had been ill-treated by a woman—which was no wonder, they added, seeing what an overbearing old boy the same Mr. Moore

was—or else he could not have held a dissentient opinion on what was so patently a true doctrine, to wit, that the woman pays.

CHAPTER XVIII

WHEN they had left Ireland, they had left a smiling land, blue of grass and of harebell, the fine glazed yellow of the buttercups, proud trees, and gentle mountains. It had been a summer of honey, a drowsy, fairy-like summer. The great barges floating down the canals from the west to the east of Ireland had known no summer more peaceful, more beautiful. The high carol of the meadow-lark had been like a crystal mountain stream, and the gentle winds had not moved the soft fluff of the bog-flower. The blue heat-haze over the midlands had been like the blue cloak of some soft Irish queen. The green waves of Achill had been beautiful, harmonious, and on the upper stretches of

the Liffey the ancient swans had known no lovelier season. Over the weirs of Ballyshannon the salmon had come, the blue salmon with the charge and leap of a racing horse, in such quantities that one would think there was a parliament of them in the sedge-bordered, sun-haunted Irish lakes. And such moons there had never been.

But they returned to a weeping land. November of the joyous frosts had come in sadly, November of the hare, November of the fox. Rain streamed from the west in fine drizzling sheets. And Dublin City that can have such beauty, such tragic dignity, was now a brown wet thing, like some old woman of the roads in a dun shawl, sheltering herself but indifferently under a dripping hedge-row. The Irish hills were covered with billowing clouds that hid them to their knees. Two-Rock and Three-Rock Mountain, and the Scalp,

and the Sugar-Loaves were not visible. All had covered themselves with a mantle of white cloud, as though on their summits the sad Irish gods were performing their dim tragic rites.

The haggards where corn rose in great stacks were dreary. The thatched cottages were brown, huddling like sea-birds. Shanganagh, their home, had about it an air of distress. Trees drooped, their leaves yellow, uncrisp. And where the flowers had been so smiling, so riotous, were now beds of loam, through which one could not see, in his mind's eye, the crocus and the primrose and the daffodil spring. In the greenhouses, the chrysanthemums, that should have heads like bold, pretty children, were just alien flowers, drooping, far from home. The house itself was gloomy; the coal-fires, the fires of sea-coal that should burn bright green and yellow, were dull. Dull were the rooms. Rain

streamed down the great windows like the tide sucking back from great sea-rocks. Everywhere was a humid cold.

They had come back to Shanganagh from Venice because there was, it seemed, nowhere else to go. When de Bourke had mentioned Africa, Sicily, Joan had smiled, as though it didn't matter where they went, all places in the world being the same to her. He had counted on the Irish autumn, the crisp race-meetings, the quiet peace of home cheering her up, and so they had returned. Also, he, too, was homesick. The Riviera, Venice, were an alien relaxing atmosphere, and his heart clamored for Irish speech, for Irish faces. Abroad, in garrison, there had been the hardness of soldiering, the firmness of thrown-back shoulders, of duties to be accomplished. And Irishmen discussing their unending problem, Ireland. Here was nothing. He must get back to Ireland.

But the Joan he brought back was not the brave spirit he had fled abroad with; she was not the gay companion of Monte Carlo and Nice; she was not the harassed soul of Venice; she was broken, as if some important, some vital thing in her were broken. It seemed to him that now, more than ever, she was the religious. She had the obedient way of nuns. At railroad stations, at hotels, she would not move until she was told. It seemed to him that she was more beautiful than ever now. Her hair was beautiful and crisp, and her golden eyes were shy, submissive. There was a thinness about her face that gave it an austere haunted look. She was a young beautiful woman broken by tragedy.

All the wonderful things he had bought for her—the gay Italian silks; the soft Venetian shawls; the gold and topaz Byzantine bandeau that made her look like a doge's lady, like a *dogaresa* of old Venice, majestic and strong; the slippers

of gold and the golden stockings—all these she put aside. She dressed now in soft black that gave her the look of princesses, and accentuated the nun-like atmosphere. She was like some princess who had become a nun.

At Marseilles, when he was getting rooms for them, she asked for a room apart from his, and small and poor, she said.

“But, Joan—”

“Please, *de Bourke*, please!” she pleaded. And tears flooded the golden eyes.

“Don’t you love me any more, Joan?”

“I love you, *de Bourke*, I love you always, but I cannot love you closely any more. *De Bourke*, you are so strong, so gallant, and so kind, who could not but love you? But to love you intimately, *de Bourke*, any more, it would more than kill me. The gates of hell, *de Bourke*, would have me inside them forever and ever.

Don't you see, de Bourke, the gates of hell would close behind me with lock and bar?"

And she would look at him with firm heartbroken eyes.

He did all he could to bend her, to get these that he was sure were morbid notions out of her head, these abnormal feelings from her heart; but in her was an eery strength against which he could not cope, a strength supple as whalebone, firm as steel. Whence she got it he did not know, but it made him fearful. And then one morning he found her without her wedding-ring.

"What have you done with your ring, Joan?"

"I have put it aside, de Bourke, because"—she looked heartbrokenly at him—"that form in the legal man's office was not a wedding at all. I am not your wife, de Bourke. I was married when the bishop cut off my hair. Now"—her voice

became a low whisper—"I am only a woman taken in adultery."

A great purple cloud came over his face, and his eyes grew hard, hard and dangerous.

"Be kind to me, de Bourke," she said quickly; "be easy with me—for I am the most stricken woman in the world."

And of course he was kind to her.

And thus they came back home, to Ireland, to Shanganagh.

CHAPTER XIX

IT was a peculiar thing, but, of all the estates around, the one that seemed to stand up most bravely under the weeping winter was Drimmond. As he passed it, it seemed to him that it was like the ark of Noah, pitched within and without with pitch; the rain and misery of the humid weather could not prevail against it. One got an impression of healthy fires gleaming on waxed floors, and now and then he could see one of the sisterhood in white gown and hood and broad leathern belt, going about under a great umbrella. Or when a gleam of sickly winter sunshine came, he could see them go two by two down the path Joan used to go; the path was dry, so rich the loam of Drimmond

was. And thence he would go back to weeping Shanganagh.

Between them, now they had come back, had sprung up some high wall, so high that it was terrible. She would not have his mother's room that was so long and light and airy, but must have a poor little place that once was attached to the nursery. His own room that he had loved—so manly, with the smell of leather, riding-boots, a favorite saddle, polo-sticks, prints of hunting-scenes—was without charm for him now. It was like a room in an inn. One by one the servants went, and were replaced by gloomy English servants. His own man reënlisted in the Connaught Rangers, so that he was left with a morose funereal valet who depressed him. And it still rained.

She would come down in the mornings, great rings about her eyes as though she had had no sleep whatever, and she would attempt to be cheerful over the break-

fast, and he would act as though everything were perfectly normal, as though they were normal husband and wife in a normal home. But they were like two actors in an unconvincing play before an all but empty house. The words rang hollow; the stilted actions were hollow. They were like mummers who wondered what the morrow would bring, when the play was done, and there was no new play to be produced, and no warm audience to give it before.

He would rally her on staying in the house. "You must go out, rain or no rain!" he would insist, and obediently she would put on a storm-coat and small leathern hat, and tramp the roads with him. The rain had washed the roads clear of clay, until beneath their feet there was nothing but the small blue shards of road-metal, sharp as a knife, and here and there cold pools of water. The mountains were shrouded from their gaze with

clouds gray and thick as the coats of the sheep that roamed there. And now and then in the hedge-rows that were a sickly yellowish green, some lone bird piped a melancholy song.

When they met any one on the road, she trembled, as a frightened horse trembles, but she did not draw near O'Malley as once she would have done.

Another occasion he forced her to go to Dublin, thinking that the sight of shops, of the gaiety of Grafton Street, would take her mind from the morbid track on which it was now running. She went with him, in dark clothes and so heavily veiled that she attracted attention where she wished to avoid it. He pointed out to her, unthinkingly, the shop where he had bought for her, one summer morning, the clothes in which she had fled with him to London. He thought she might smile, but two great tears ran down her cheeks.

She never would go to Dublin any more.

"De Bourke," she said, "please don't ask me to go out any more. I am all right here," she said, "doing needlework, and keeping accounts, and walking in the garden. I don't need to go out. Remember, I was only accustomed to a cell, and a garden walk, before you—before I met you. And when I see people, de Bourke, I tremble from head to foot. Please let me be, de Bourke—you are so kind—please let me be."

"Very well, Joan," he said, "if you are less unhappy here."

He went once into his club, the Fitzwilliam Square Club, but the first person he saw there was Paddy Brabazon. A mad desire came on him to seize by the throat this man, but for whom, he felt, they would have been happy. He saw the thick runty man go from group to group, whispering. Furtive glances came his

way. He knew they were discussing him. He flung out of the club. The next day they had his resignation.

A great fear came on him of the Brabazons and the Brabazon clique, and knowing they were always hunting with the Ward Union and the Meath, his heart sank. He had counted so much on the hunting in Ireland, but now he had not the nerve to face them. The groom who had taken care of and exercised the hunters was always after him to use them. But his heart was not in them any more.

"Take them to Sewell's," he said, "and tell Sewell to sell them," he directed.

"And if I do, your Honor," the groom said, "what work will there be at me here at all, barring looking after Lady Bessie, that 's the harness-horse? 'T is the waste of a good man," he told de Bourke, "to be keeping him in a mild job, me that 's used to high-leaping horses."

"If you can find another job—"

"Not one, but a hundred, your Honor."

"Then go, Mulcahy," de Bourke said.

"I shall give you a month's wages, and I wish you good luck."

"But about Lady Bessie, your Honor?"

"Send her to Sewell's, too. If I need a trap or dog-cart, I can hire one. There's none in this place has the heart for a horse."

"I'm sorry, your Honor. I am so."

O'Malley stood looking at the stables, that were soon to be empty, that were never empty before, and a sense of doom came over him. Before he turned in to his cold home, he looked at the mountains. In summer they had been soft and purple, like some kind majesty, and when he had returned from Venice they had been white and weeping, and later gray and heavy, but now the clouds that covered them were bluish black, slate-colored, the saddest color in all the world.

CHAPTER XX

THE only living thing that clung to him was the red setter he had bought and left behind before he went to Monte Carlo and to Venice; and, strangely, it had remembered him and welcomed him back with loud clamor, and now it was always at his heels. It was so friendly, it filled such a need, that he had not the heart to leave it out when he entered the house, but let it come into dining- and drawing-rooms with him, leaving the marks of its muddy paws over the waxed floors, and lying wet on the rug before the cheerless fires. Joan never said a word about it, though he knew the immaculate condition of the house was due to her.

"I ought n't to bring poor old Danny in here, Joan, but—"

"Of course you ought, de Bourke. Why shouldn't you? The dog loves you."

He had discharged his valet. The man's funereal appearance had begun to irritate de Bourke, the utter smugness of him; so giving him a month's wages and his fare to London, he had sent him home. Now he noticed that there were few servants left; the one most in evidence was a parlor-maid, a thin ascetic-looking woman who wore a crucifix on her meager bosom—a religious-looking person, to whom de Bourke took an intense dislike. He wished she would take her religious symbol from her dress, but he had not the courage to demand it.

"Where are all the servants, Joan?"

"They wanted to go, and I let them, de Bourke," she said. "It's the rain," she explained. "They can't stand the

unceasing rain. But don't worry, de Bourke; the house will be run as efficiently as ever."

He had a notion that a great deal of the housework was done by her, but said nothing. He understood the Irish servants. Protestant and Catholic, they were superstitious. They would not work for a former religious. Hadn't the gardeners gone without notice or anything? Damn! That reminded him. He must flush a brace of new gardeners. Shanganagh was going to ruin. As to the housework, if she were doing it, it would keep her mind occupied. It was better than sitting in a small room, meditating morbidly.

The days held so very little for him that he looked forward to the night, when Joan and the servants had gone to their beds, and then, the red setter beside him, he would sit by the fire with a decanter of brandy and bottles of soda-water, and

light his brier-wood pipe. A hush would come over the house, and there would be no sound but the snuffling of the dog, and the moaning of the wind outside. He would pour out his stiff glass of brandy and dash of soda, and the warm, powerful, raisinish smell of the cognac would creep up his nostrils like an anesthetic; and when he had drunk one glass and poured out another ready for consumption, the rigidity of mind and body would pass somewhat, and things that looked so gloomy in the daytime would appear less tragic now. They would not appear bright; far from it; but they would seem soluble, with a little patience, a little thought. The drawing-room would contract somewhat, seeming less cold, the corners less forbidding. The fire he would poke into a small blaze, and the portraits of the O'Malleys would seem to encourage him, saying: "We, too, have been through crises not less dark than this of

yours. Steady, O'Malley!" And with a little more cognac his heart would rise higher, and he would think that the Irishman's chance, war, might come soon, and he would be sure of a billet under an old commander in some campaign against Afghan or Chinese or Turk. And while he was away, Joan would become more used to life without convent-walls, would have time to meditate and find herself. He would let old Shanganagh for a term of years to some family who would cherish it, and on his return all would be well. He could imagine Joan, beautiful, healthy, meeting him bronzed, lean, after the war was over.

The clock striking two, he would rise, and blowing out the candles and lamps, he would walk, a little unsteadily, to his own room, while Danny, the red setter, would follow him carefully, like a friend who accompanies a friend to see that no harm would befall him. . . . So he would turn

in, sure that the warm liquor would bring him blessed sleep, sure that the morrow, or some near morrow, would bring a solution of all this tangle. The red setter would curl himself at the foot of the bed, and O'Malley would blow out the light.

But the morning brought only grayness and loneliness and the sight of Shanganagh growing more shabby every day. Over the lawn that had been kept keen and true as a bowling-green, the grass pushed up languidly in uneven ragged patches. Yellow, scrofulous leaves drifted over it, and lay unkempt on the blue-stone walks. The trees seemed lonely, uncared for, and what was going on in the greenhouses he was too sick at heart to investigate. One morning he saw the lock of the tool-house forced, and, looking in, noted that lawnmowers and spades had gone. Already the looters of the country-side had begun their work. This, more than anything

else, hurt him. Surely they might have let him be. His own countrymen to plunder him, when he was so desolate! Ah! That was hard!

He would put on heavy boots and rain-coat and a deer-stalker hat, and with a heavy ash stick in his hand and the red setter beside him, he would set out for a long tramp along the country roads, northward toward Rathfarnham, over the elbow of Three-Rock, or southward toward Bray, or along the sea-shore into Dublin. And when he was tired, he would turn into one of the little public houses along the road and have a sandwich and a whisky and soda. And when that was finished, and because the day was gray and here was a fire, he would order another. He would sit there quietly drinking for hours, while the come-and-go of the pub's clients lounged up to the bar for their pint of porter or half one of whisky. So dull was it at home that he

loved their voices. They were always talking of this angle of sport, or of that, or discussing foreign travel. "Jim Whelan has a dog, begob, and the like of him Ireland has not yet seen. There is n't a hare in the Boyne Valley has the speed, no, nor the cunning to get past that dog, and the name that 's on him is Erin-go-bragh. And you could n't buy that dog for the crown jewels in Dublin Castle, no, nor for twenty pounds!" Or some account of a race at the Curragh: "So Barney gives us a wink to bet on Fusilier, th' outsider, and he mounts the favorite. Devil such a comedy you never saw! There was Barney coming up the home stretch with a rein loose on the off side, and him letting on to be beating up the horse like a Russian duke, and the whip never touching him. Oh, 't was grand! So the Fusilier walks it. And up comes Barney's horse's owner, and he said, 'Barney,' he said, 'you did your best.'

'I did so!' says Barney. 'The horse couldn't win,' says the owner. 'You never said a truer word,' says Barney. 'Ah, well, Barney,' he said, 'here's a ten-pound for you.' And Barney wit' fifty on Fusilier at eight to one!"

Or some returned American would come in, and the conversation would turn on America. "And where did you say you come from?" "From Cincinnati." "Then you'll know little Jamesie Halloran there." "I'm afraid I don't." "Listen, mister"—they would poke the visitor's white waistcoat with a filthy forefinger—"in my opinion you don't come from Cincinnati at all, for let me tell you something, there wasn't a street in Dublin that didn't know little Jamesie Halloran, and do you mean to tell me, mister, that a man could be well known in a grand outrageous place like Dublin City and never heard tell of in a mild American

town? In my opinion, mister, you never were further than Manchester or Birmingham in your life, and you come back here in your grand clothes letting on to be a Yank. For two pins or a pint of porther, mister, I'd take you outside and knock that suit off you." But the visitor would be gone.

"Did you ever hear such a liar in all your life?"

"'T was outrageous so!"

"To say he came from Cincinnati and never hear tell of little Jamesie Halloran."

"'T is against all reason!"

"Did n't his cousin Biddy say he was n't there a week until the citizens came and asked him to be mayor of the town?"

"He wrote it home himself."

"And is it likely Jamesie Halloran would tell a lie? Let me tell you,

gentlemen, in all my life I never met a more pure and edifyin' young man. Here 's to him wherever he goes!"

"Johneen," the publican would call his assistant, "let you go now and see if the gentleman in the snug would like another little taste of comfort."

A half-year ago he could not have imagined himself sitting quietly in these boozing-kens, listening to the conversation of the road-going people. He had heard then of Irish gentlemen who had gone wrong through drink—not of course that he was going wrong, or that he could n't stop this at any moment he wanted to—and he could n't understand it. There had always been a semi-military code between the Irish nobility and gentry and their peasant folk. One took care of one's tenants, one was fond of them, but one did n't drink with them. There existed always this respect and friendship, so that when war came, and they were no

longer peasantry and gentry, but Irish soldiers led by Irish officers, nothing in the art of war could withstand them. A man who transgressed this unwritten law was guilty of conduct unbecoming.

But it was so pleasant, de Bourke thought, so damned much more pleasant than sitting at home in the weeping house. And the people here, were they not better than that Marquis of Clancolin, who had never even written his daughter when he knew she had left the convent; than his Lordship the Bishop of Clare; than Paddy Brabazon; than the Birrs; than the whole of the Fitzwilliam Square Club, in all which no hand was proffered him when he entered? There was a lot to this socialism after all, he philosophized over his whisky.

He had, to his surprise, an excellent head for spirits, for he had never indulged in them to any extent before, or perhaps it was something in the damp Irish climate

that required spirits; but beyond a certain mellowing and warmth, and a little, just a little, amusing uncertainty as to his walk, which he could overcome by slight concentration, no effect was apparent to him. So paying his score, and whistling to the red setter, he would set off toward Shanganagh. The early winter evenings were in it, and through the dusk were the warm lights of cottages. He often wished he could turn in to one of these, a laborer home from the fields, rather than trudging home to the polished boards and wax-candles of Shanganagh, to a state that was a farce, so much unhappiness was beneath it, to a wife who was no wife at all.

It seemed to him that she had collected herself into a station and state of mind that satisfied her for the present. There she always was, before him at table. The ethereal beauty of her lovely face with golden eyes, her hair curly and golden

red, but about her a cold electric atmosphere through which he could not pierce. She was like some bride of a god who had condescended to grace his table. And always she was the lady of quality, making small talk before the servants, or the servant, Annette, the acidulous maid with the crucifix, whom he detested. It appeared to him that Annette was always there when Joan was present. There was an understanding between mistress and maid, he sensed. Annette was to be there in case the situation became intolerable, as it so nearly always was. Joan was like some extremely beautiful, efficient housekeeper. The table was shining, the linen perfect; the greenhouses had been searched for what remained of flowers. After dinner was over, she would go into the drawing-room for a while, and speak of this and that, something about the house, some old picture, some ancient beautiful furniture, but never

of him or of her, or of religion. And then in a little while she would ask him if there was anything he required, and say, "Good night, de Bourke!" and disappear.

Annette would tend the fire, and fill the old mahogany coal-box for him, and put aside a little table with sandwiches and a decanter of brandy and the siphons, and there he would be left alone and lonely in his own house, save for the soft-eyed dog. Once Joan looked at the figure in the gay mess-jacket, sitting forlornly by the fire. A sudden spasm of pity took her. She closed the door and came back and stood above him.

"Believe me, de Bourke," her voice said huskily, "if you knew how sorry I am for ruining your life, if you knew how my heart is wrung—"

"You've done nothing, Joan. You have n't. You must n't say that."

"De Bourke," she said, "there is one

way I could atone. But, de Bourke, I—I can't do it. If I could only go down one night to that gray Irish Sea, and let myself into it, into the depths of it, then you would be free, de Bourke, and you could marry some pretty, normal woman, who would make your life worth while and safe. But I can't do it, de Bourke, for on the other side of the little crest that divides life and death, for me there is hell-fire, and a Terrible Betrayed Face." Her voice became a dreadful husky whisper. "I can't do it, de Bourke."

"You must n't talk nonsense, Joan," he said wearily.

She bent over him as he sat looking into the fire. Her golden eyes were full of tears. There was in her face a look as though she were going to bend over and kiss the bowed curly head. But she straightened herself up, white-faced.

"Good night, and God bless at least you, de Bourke."

"Good night, Joan."

He sat by the fire, and for a long time the cognac had no potency. An immense desire to flee the whole business came over him. He had a cottage in Connemara, he remembered.

"If you and I could only go there for a year, Danny," he told the dog, "it would be better for us than this life, crawling from pub to pub, though there's little in it for you, poor boy. We could get a mountainy man and woman to do for us, and there'd be grouse and plover and pheasant to shoot, and snipe and wild duck in winter, and in summer the singing of the reel as the salmon takes the fly. And we'd come at night dead tired, Danny, and need no liquor to sleep. And the peace of the mountains, Danny, and the heather, and the big Atlantic winds that fill you with life. That's the place

for us, Danny, away from this moist gray town."

The red setter would rise and come close to him, responding with soft brown eyes. He would pour himself out another brandy and soda.

"But we can't leave her that 's up-stairs, Danny, and she would n't come with us, so what 's there to do but stay here, my poor old boy?"

CHAPTER XXI

THE winter dragged on slowly. It seemed that spring would never come. Under the gray skies and by the weeping hills it was impossible that soon the ewes would be having their small doll-like lambs, and that the birds would be returning from Africa, and that primroses should be a cloud of gold upon the hills. Folk looking back said that so great a summer had been in it last year that the winter was no wonder at all.

Spring might come to Ireland, but spring would bring no life to Shanganagh any more. A few nights of wind had wrenched tiles here and there from the old house's roof and sent them hurtling through the greenhouses, where they had left gaping wounds, pathetic as wounds in

a human body. In the upper rooms of Shanganagh rain had dripped through until on the bedroom ceilings wide patches of dull gray and ugly brown had formed, and the wind had torn a great section of ivy from the northern wall. It hung over showing its dingy under side. Every day de Bourke had been on the point of having these matters repaired; but when he had gone down to the little villages, a great shame had come on him to let the villagers see what Shanganagh had come to, who had known it proud and groomed in his mother's and grandmother's time. And as the day passed on it would seem to him less and less important, until he would say: "Oh, let it go; what does it matter? Soon summer will be here, and something will happen, and when I get away and get a hold on myself all will be well. I'll come back and fix everything." But what he expected to happen he never knew, or how he expected it, or

why. Perhaps he expected nothing at all, but only thought that as an excuse for letting things go. ˆ

Himself he had let go a little too far for safety. There were days now when he did not shave, and after a day like that he would take a hold on himself, and turn out spick and span as though he were on old-time parade. None could have ever known there was anything wrong with him, unless you looked him straight in the eyes, and you would have seen his eyes waver and turn away, from weakness, from a sort of mental and spiritual exhaustion. The red setter drooped and looked sad.

He had come to hate the interior of Shanganagh. Annette, the meticulous religious maid, evidently looked on him as an emissary of Satan who had lured her mistress from the sanctuary of Drimmond and was ill-treating her by his conduct. And now—he nearly laughed,

so incongruous was it compared to his mother's time—the cook they had was some drunken old harridan, who was more often unconscious than sober. "I'm sorry, de Bourke," Joan had said, "but they won't stay. It's the rain." Sometimes the cook's howls, when in liquor, were such as, in the country, would wake the dead. For some reason or other, this irritated O'Malley more than anything else. What short shrift the old sow would have had in his mother's day! But then Joan could not get any one else.

As to Joan, there had come a sort of peace to her countenance, an ascetic peace. And O'Malley, with his brain sharpened, made more cunning by liquor, sensed that out of this ruin of Shanganagh, this ruin of himself, she was acquiring merit for herself in her own estimation. She was bearing the cross of him, and the drunken cook, and the dreadful house. She was undergoing her martyrdom, which would

put something, in her own mind, to her credit in the kingdom of heaven. Once or twice he caught flashes of a white garment about the house, and he knew she had returned, when he was not there, to her religious's habit. It only made him smile bitterly, sourly, but he said nothing. It is good for a woman to have a drunken husband over whose prostrate body one can climb into the kingdom of heaven. "Eh, Danny?"

He spent more and more of his time in Dublin now, lunching there and dining there, and, on occasions when he was a little impossible, he slept there in one of the minor hotels. He would have spent more of his time away from Shanganagh but for the dog Danny. Joan would put up with his absence as part of her cross, but the red setter would be worried. On days when he was in Dublin, Danny had formed the habit of going down to the little railway station to meet him on the

6:37 train. And when de Bourke got on the platform there was a flash of red; and the kindly eyes, the cold muzzle, the waving feathery tail, all betokened delight. If it had n't been for Danny he might not have come home at all.

In Dublin he met nobody who knew him. Whether it was they avoided him, or whether he kept to places where he would not meet his world, at any rate he saw nobody. Once indeed in Grafton Street he had a sort of encounter, but who the people were he did not know. He had been drinking a little more than was good for him, and had decided to walk from the Ship, which is in Abbey Street on the north side of the Liffey, toward St. Stephen's Green. And turning into Anne Street, where Davy Burns's public house is, he had met a young girl with a man in clerical costume. He might have been unsteady on his feet, or there was such agony in his face that drew her, so

that she stepped forward as though to touch his arm. She was a small, brown, healthy-looking girl in tweeds, with such kindness in her pretty face that it was like music. De Bourke kept looking; her face was familiar—some girl he had met with his mother, and who knew of his story and was sorry for him. She stepped forward, but the cleric laid a hand on her shoulder and warned her with half-closed eyes. She looked hurt and disappointed, but the cleric was forceful and bland.

So with a little laugh, O'Malley turned up the side street into Davy Burns's.

He could not help thinking, over his tumblers of drink, how different life would have been had he met and loved her. How healthy! She had beauty in her face, the beauty of the quick warm understanding heart that outlives all beauty of feature. Beauty of face passes from spring and summer into gaunt forbidding winter, and wit in the mature

becomes cynicism in the old, but the warm heart is like a soft turf fire. Eh, God! the happy household, the healthy children, the riding to hounds! Danny would have loved a mistress like that!

Well, at any rate, he had Danny!

He boarded the train at Westland Row, and sat, cold and aloof among the returning business folk. He had always to pull himself together like a soldier on parade for the sad dinner at Shanganagh. He alighted with the rest at Dunegan Station. He looked about for Danny. On the other side of the line the train from Bray was passing. Suddenly he saw Danny. Danny was late. Danny was coming down the grass embankment crossing the line.

"Keep back, Danny," he shouted. "Keep back."

The left buffer of the Bray train caught and hurled Danny back on the grass embankment. And at that moment

O'Malley felt his heart break. It cracked from top to bottom, zigzag, like an old wall giving. He crossed and picked up the limp red body that had housed his only friend.

"Is he dead?" some one asked.

"I'm afraid so," O'Malley said calmly. He wrapped poor Danny up in his overcoat. When he was alone, burying Danny with his own hands, Danny would know how he felt. Poor Danny, who had come to meet his master!

"Ah, sure, the poor gentleman," an old woman said in her whining Dublin voice, "you can see he's heartbroken about his big red dog. Who is he, anyhow?"

"'T is the nun's husband," some one volunteered.

"Ah, sure, hell's cure to him!" said the old woman. "What luck could he be having anyhow?"

CHAPTER XXII

THOUGH spring had come to Ireland, O'Malley paid no attention to it, for it had come too late. The lambs on their light black feet were playing on the hillsides. The hard crisp buds of the hawthorn were putting forth. The evenings were lengthening out into dim blue Irish twilights, in which the birds sang their high clear songs. The plowman was at his work, and the turf-cutter plying his trade. The little donkeys of the mountainy people were driven down laden with brooms of fresh green heather.

And in the big houses about, the gardeners were tending lawns and flowerbeds. The primulæ with their soft-hued heads were already singing the antiphon of summer. Primroses flaunted their

gold. With trowels they were bedding out the flowers that had been carefully nurtured in the greenhouses, through the sad winter months. The bees were beginning their adventures in the fields. Soon April would be here, mild shy April in her sprigged virginal dress.

Without was the soft spring twilight, ineffable as young love. Shy trees, shy hedges, and the clear long notes of the blackbird, the golden music pouring through his golden bill; but within here, in Rory Clancy's public house, was the unclean air of a place that had not been aired, the sickly smell of ancient winters. It was a small mean pub, with small windows, bull's-eye panes of thick all but opaque glass; the only merit it had was privacy. The small deal counter was mottled with stout stains, and one got the impression that here in summer would be Egypt's plague of flies. The pub provided groceries, too, of a kind. Here

were tin tea and coffee canisters on shelves by the wall, jostling the bottles of whisky. Here was a side of rank bacon, by a rusty mechanical cutter. Here were uninviting loaves of bread. Here were bags of flour, here a bag of coarse sugar. On the walls were calendars, given as advertisements, by sewing-machine companies, by guano firms, their simpering Devonshire lassies beside a green portrait of bold Robert Emmet defying his judges and executioners to break his spirit though they should break his neck. And behind the counter Rory Clancy's wife read a cheap novelette, a middle-aged mean-faced woman huddled in a brown shawl. Beside the counter, there was a snug or little private apartment, where customers of the better kind could take their drinks and smoke their pipes in peace.

A client came in for his pre-dinner drink. He was a thick laboring-man, with two days' growth of black close

beard on his gnarled peasant's face. He wore a gray flannel shirt and a sleeved waistcoat. His corduroy trousers were caught in at the knees with tapes of rushes.

"And what'll it be, Shamus?" asked Mrs. Clancy.

"*Pinta stuata*, Mrs. Clancy," he told her. "A pint of stout."

"Begob," he broke out, after an eager gulp of his drink, "'t is myself is after seeing the queer thing this day."

"What was it, Shamus?" asked Mrs. Clancy.

"D' you mind the Protestant nun," he asked, "who married O'Malley o' Shanganagh?"

"Speak low," said Mrs. Clancy.

"Well, I saw her to-day, and me coming along the Stillorgan," said Shamus, "and I'm damned if she was n't going back into Drimmond convent, with two white sisters alongside of her, and the mean-faced maid behind her, and begor, butter

would n't melt in her mouth, she was that pleased—"

"Will you hold you whisht!" Mrs. Clancy warned, jerking her dirty thumb toward the snug.

"There was always great discussions," Shamus went on stupidly, "as to whether she would do away with herself, or go back in the latter end. Myself," said Shamus, "I was always for the suicide."

"Will you shut your big mouth," said Mrs. Clancy fiercely, gripping his arm. At last Shamus understood.

"Aw, begob!" said he.

In the snug O'Malley started to his feet. There was something to be done. He must go. But what was there to be done? He couldn't think. And whither would he go? To shabby Shanganagh, where now there would be none but the drunken old cook? And she probably in the horrors! He sat down again, and reached for his drink.



